

"WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, TRUST GOD"

{Proverbs 3:1-10}

Trinity Presbyterian Church

November 9, 2008

I like Eugene Peterson's rendering of this morning's text from the Book of Proverbs in "*THE MESSAGE*"—and I'm reversing the sequence of the verses—

"Honor God with everything you own; give Him the first and the best. Your barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over...therefore, trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He's the one who will keep you on track..."

For over half a century the messages from this pulpit have called people to a life of commitment and faith; and today we're reminded of God's faith in us. You know, **God must have an awful lot of trust in us to entrust all that He has to us.** He has blessed us materially beyond measure *{compared to most of the world}* and He has filled our vats spiritually and promised us an incredible inheritance in Heaven in the future.

Today is Stewardship Sunday. Every pastor I know cringes a bit when this day arrives knowing that there are those who will say that every time they come to church the pastor talks about money! But, the Bible speaks about money—the giving of a tithe—**10% of our income to God's work.** Jesus talked about money! The Apostle Paul wrote about money—and, **God's work is dependant upon our faithful commitment to support His work.**

Martin Luther said: *"Three conversions that are necessary: Conversion of the Heart, Conversion of the Mind, and Conversion of the Purse!"* Many Christians can handle the first two; however, when it comes to giving God **"our first and our best"** we have a problem.

People seem to get fidgety when we talk about *their* money; however, I must say that I'm extremely impressed with the sacrificial giving of the people of Trinity Presbyterian Church. I think that our per-capita giving is the highest in the Presbytery of San Jose...and I **commend you.**

Dr. Robert Schuller wrote in one of his earliest books, *"Don't ask how much it costs...ask, is it God's will? If it's God will, He will supply the money!"* I believe that—and many of you believe that because it's reflected in your giving!

Let me give you some financial facts.

- ✚ We have to date received approximately \$252,350 in general offerings for the first 44 weeks of the year. What makes this astounding is that is an average of \$47.23 per attendee! *{Obviously there are those who give considerably more than that and others who are on limited income and give less—and there are those who withhold their "first" and "best" from the Lord's work!}* For those who give, there are incredible blessings...for those who withhold, all I can say is, you're missing out on God's blessing!

- ✚ Let me talk to you about Mission. We have an incredible momentum going at Trinity ever since we officially became partners with the Global Discipleship Ministries led by Rev. Elijah Sebuchu last spring. In addition to the 13% that goes to mission for every dollar received we have received so far this year \$46,340 in special designated mission money—
 - \$3,753.50 for special Presbyterian Mission Offerings
 - \$4,508.00 to send two of our college youth to Africa
 - \$2,195.00 from our youth World Vision Fast
 - \$ 105.00 given by our youth for their mission project
 - \$35,978.00 to Uganda—Global Discipleship—and we’ve only scratched the surface
- ✚ **Let me talk to you about Youth Ministry.** In addition to the funds given to two of our youth to go to Africa, we received
 - \$26,048 for our youth intern ministry. We presently have Chelsea Anderson and Richie Thayer working as interns; and our third intern, Jake Espy is involved in the Joshua Wilderness Institute sponsored by Hume Lake—we’ve sent \$5,500 in support of this ministry to Jake
 - And you’ve given \$13,834 this year to our overall youth ministry and sent more youth to camp this past summer than ever before.
 - Ryan Tally works approximately 25 hours per week and Vincent Arishvara is full time with our youth.

Now, we face the challenge of 2009. I need not tell you that these are not the best of times financially for our nation and perhaps for a number of you; however, we cannot curtail our ministry.

Your session has worked for over two months on the new budget and the bottom line is that just to maintain our present ministry it will cost us approximately \$31,680 more than this year. The good news is that we received a bequest from a member who died earlier this year for \$12,000 bringing down the total needed—over this year’s budget of \$19,680.

I have no doubt that you the people of Trinity will once again step forward and we will meet this. Just what does it boil down to you ask—

\$378.46 *more* per Sunday

\$ 3.13 *more* per week per attendee

But, there may be one person—*or two*—who are just sitting on a nest egg and would like the blessing of picking up the entire \$19,680. I would personally give you a great big bear hug if you see this as giving opportunity you’ve been seeking!

CONCLUSION

Now, let’s go back to our text of the morning.

“Honor God with everything you own; give Him the first and the best. Your barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over...therefore, trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He’s the one who will keep you on track...”

Our attitude toward money shapes our relationship with God. One of the most profound things Jesus ever said was: ***“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!”*** {Matthew 6:21). Where we put our money, we put our interest. Put your money in the stock market and I guarantee that you will either go online or check the financial page of the *San Jose Mercury News* each day to see whether your investment has gone up...or down! **Wherever you put your money you’ll focus your attention.**

It is just as true: **where you put your heart you will put your treasure.** Your money is the language of your heart and first loves. When Zaccheus took Jesus into his home and allowed him to invade his heart, **he redirected his own treasure from earth to heaven!** **When the heart is converted to Christ he wants the heart...the mind...and your purse!** You see either Jesus is Lord of all...or He’s not Lord at all! That’s the question we must all answer.

I commend you for your giving in 2008 and believe God will meet ALL our needs in 2009 because of your faithfulness!