

The Riddle of Riches

Psalm 49

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

- ¹ Hear this, all you peoples;
listen, all who live in this world,
² both low and high,
rich and poor alike:
³ My mouth will speak words of wisdom;
the meditation of my heart will give you understanding.
⁴ I will turn my ear to a proverb;
with the harp I will expound my riddle:
- ⁵ Why should I fear when evil days come,
when wicked deceivers surround me—
⁶ those who trust in their wealth
and boast of their great riches?
- ⁷ No one can redeem the life of another
or give to God a ransom for them—
⁸ the ransom for a life is costly,
no payment is ever enough—
⁹ so that they should live on forever
and not see decay.
- ¹⁰ For all can see that the wise die,
that the foolish and the senseless also perish,
leaving their wealth to others.
- ¹¹ Their tombs will remain their houses forever,
their dwellings for endless generations,
though they had named lands after themselves.
- ¹² **People, despite their wealth, do not endure;
they are like the beasts that perish.**
- ¹³ **This is the fate of those who trust in themselves,
and of their followers, who approve their sayings.**
- ¹⁴ They are like sheep and are destined to die;
death will be their shepherd
(but the upright will prevail over them in the morning).
Their forms will decay in the grave,
far from their princely mansions.

¹⁵ But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead;
he will surely take me to himself.

¹⁶ Do not be overawed when others grow rich,
when the splendor of their houses increases;

¹⁷ for they will take nothing with them when they die,
their splendor will not descend with them.

¹⁸ Though while they live they count themselves blessed—
and people praise you when you prosper—

¹⁹ they will join those who have gone before them,
who will never again see the light of life.

²⁰ **People who have wealth but lack understanding
are like the beasts that perish.**

The Shape of this Psalm

1. Introduction - as a wisdom psalm
2. Wealth creates the illusion of security - Everyone Dies in the End.
3. Self-sufficiency is true death that lasts - Wealth without wisdom makes you no better than a beast.

"He who dies with the most toys, wins!" vs. "He who dies with the most toys still dies."

Reflection

This is about material wealth but it is also about the power and influence that material wealth affords. Money is an aspect of power and can be used for good or for evil. Sometimes it is hard to sort out.

We are equal in death although not necessarily in life.

In regard to money, position, influence and power.

But God does not look up to the rich.

To him, in his perspective, wealth is not about accumulation but creation.

And who is creation for?

All humanity.

We use a skewed paradigm.

Wealth cannot protect you from what matters.

In fact, it can cause your destruction.

Contentment is true wealth.

Having enough.

And there is only one enough - God.

Anything less than having him is not merely poverty.

It is meaningless.

It is meaningless.

Questions

In what ways can wealth be used negatively?

In what ways can wealth be used positively?

In what ways do we trust wealth instead of God?

What can we do to not become focussed on wealth?

Missional Money - Redeeming Riches

Treating Money differently through generosity.

Placing your trust not in accumulation of wealth.

Never look up to those who have more - never look down on those have less.

Do not idolize those with. Do not despise those without.

The riddle is about how will you live?