

Reflections on Financial Security

By John M. Whalen

Being in the financial services industry, I can "relate" to the following:

A lesson from history

[Collected on the Internet, 2003]

The question:

In 1923, who was:

1. President of the largest steel company?
2. President of the largest gas company?
3. President of the New York Stock Exchange?
4. Greatest wheat speculator?
5. President of the Bank of International Settlement?
6. Wheat Bear of Wall Street?

These men were considered some of the world's most successful of their day. Now, 80 years later, the history book asks us, if we know what ultimately became of them. The answer:

1. The president of the largest steel company, Charles Schwab, died a pauper.
2. The president of the largest gas company, Edward Hopson, went insane.
3. The president of the NYSE, Richard Whitney, was released from prison to die at home.
4. The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cooger, died abroad, penniless.
5. The president of the Bank of International Settlement, shot himself.
6. The Great Bear of Wall Street, Cosabee Livermore, also committed suicide.

[Presbyterian sermon, 2003]

In 1923 at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, eight of the most powerful and wealthy men in the world gathered together for a meeting. These eight, if they combined their resources and assets, controlled more money than the U.S. Treasury. In that group we find such men as Charles Schwab, the president of a steel company. Richard Whitney was the president of the New York Stock Exchange. Arthur Cutton was a wheat speculator. Albert Fall was a presidential cabinet member, personally a very wealthy man. Jesse Livermore was the greatest bear on Wall Street in his generation. Leon Fraser was the president of the International Bank of Settlements. And Ivan Krueger headed the largest monopoly in the world. Quite an impressive and ambitious group of people!

Let's look at the same group of men later in life. Charles Schwab died penniless. Richard Whitney spent the rest of his life serving a sentence in Sing Sing Prison. Arthur Cutton became insolvent. Albert Fall was pardoned from a federal prison so he might die at home. Leon Fraser committed suicide. Jesse

Livermore committed suicide. Ivan Krueger also committed suicide. Seven of these eight ambitious money-magnates lived lives that ended in disaster before they passed on from this life. Again I ask, are you chasing the wrong dream?

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mt. 16:26

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:1-4

"For the wages of sin is death...." Romans 6:23

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment...." Hebrews 9:27

"...if riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Psalms 62:10

"He that trusteth in his riches shall fall..." Proverbs 11:28

The Apostle Paul, who had everything going his way, made a startling and abrupt turn around at the prompting of God, and later declared, "... and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ...." (Philippians 3:8).

Having a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is the key to real happiness and success in life, and only his resurrected life within a man can fulfill him. No amount of material success can satisfy man's innermost being, for "...the eyes of man are never satisfied...."(Proverbs 27:20). I personally have learned not to "take too seriously" rich people-just as believers do, they face certain physical death. However, unlike those who have been redeemed by the completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ 2000 years ago through his death, burial, and resurrection(1 Corinthians 15:1-4), those who have not trusted this completed work face certain spiritual death, which is eternal separation from a holy and righteous LORD God.

In contrast, believers, solely by the grace of God, have a pretty solid retirement plan!:

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Romans 8:7

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Galatians 4:7

"Can't get much richer than that"!

Are we believers in Christ looking forward to retirement, or the rapture/resurrection? I would ask that we "...think on these things...."(Philippians 4:8), and that God help all of us day- by- day to "get our

priorities in line"-bringing glory to God by seeking and setting our affection on those things which are above, and not on things on the earth.

In and with Christ,

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