

IT WAS WRITTEN ON MONEY

I received a very strange phone call on Saturday afternoon. When I answered the phone, the person said, "I am calling you because your phone number is written on a five dollar bill I was just given." I don't think I have ever had a phone conversation start off this way. Apparently, he was given this \$5.00 bill that had my phone number on it a few minutes earlier at a Tim Hortons in Cambridge. When he saw the number he said, "I was just curious to call to find out who would answer."

I don't know if he was counting on a pastor from Brantford answering but that is what he discovered. I thanked him for calling and shared with him I had no idea how my phone number ended up on that \$5.00 bill. After hanging up, this man actually sent me a text a few minutes later with a picture of the \$5.00 bill that prompted his call. I thought to myself afterwards how fitting it was that this \$5.00 bill with my phone number written on it would turn up at a Tim Hortons where this pastor loves to get his morning coffee from.

Whoever wrote my number on that \$5.00 bill must not have had anything else at the time to write it down on when they wanted to get in touch with me. This incident got me thinking about what we may see written on money. My first thought was how we see the words "In God We Trust" written on U.S. coins and bills. Being a pastor, this naturally led me to begin thinking about two stories in the Bible when Jesus noticed messages people were writing with their money.

The first story I thought of was of the rich young man who wanted to know what he must do in order to inherit eternal life. He felt that he was obeying all of the commandments, but Jesus wanted to point out to him that the message he was writing on his money showed otherwise. Jesus said to him in **Mark 10:21**:

Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.

This rich young man walked away very sad because he realized at that moment the message that he had been writing on his money was he trusted it more than he did God.

The other story I thought about was when Jesus watched a poor widow place her offerings in a collection box at the temple. He was so inspired by the message she was writing on the money that He called His disciples together and said:

I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on. (Mark 12:43-44)

Jesus could see that the message this widow was writing on her money that day expressed her genuine love for God and trust in Him. God does not expect us to sell all of our possession nor give all that we have just like this poor widow did. These examples are reminders to us that God watches very closely to see what messages we are writing on our money with respect to our attitudes toward it. I began wondering if the surprise phone call to me on Saturday was God's way through this message to get us thinking about what messages we might be conveying to Him with respect to our money. Is God seeing from us:

- that our trust in Him is stronger than our trust in our money?
- that we are holding onto our relationship with Him tighter than we are to our money?
- that we value Him more than we value the amount in our savings?

Our attitude and approach toward money is just one way we convey messages to God of how much we appreciate and value Him. While we do not have the words "In God We Trust" on our currency here, let's make sure this is the message we are sending to Him when it comes to our money and giving.

That strange phone call on Saturday inspired this message. It also inspired me afterward to take a trip over to my nearby Tims for a coffee.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean