

Money Matters Week 3 - 12 July 2009

How can we reach out to the post “Credit Crunch” world?

What we covered in Week 3

The “Credit Crunch” may make many people question the priorities that are important in our modern world. The pursuit of money and wealth for its own sake has in so many ways been proved to be a ‘bankrupt’ idea. But what can replace it? The Old Testament prophets would surely have had plenty to say about this!

So how do we get across God’s Message in a new way that will be relevant, positive and meaningful to those around us? We have responsibilities for this both individually and as part of the Church. Neither is likely to be easy. But perhaps there are some guidelines. We need to grasp that Christian lifestyle is meant to be different not just slightly better (i.e. in its true form it is counter cultural). We also need confidence and boldness when sharing our message –we really do have something we can both believe in and act on. But we also have to accept that a fallen world will not always heed God’s ways however much the landscape may seem to have changed. Finally, we need to support those Christians who are in the front line on issues like this as they present real Christianity as being about ‘a way of being’ as well as ‘a system of belief’. What they are doing is as fundamentally important and relevant as what we do within the Church from week to week and they need our prayers.

A thought about money and possessions from the words of Jesus

Money isn’t a be all and end all – is this simple message the key lesson of the “Credit Crunch”?

Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

An example from the life of Nehemiah

There was an economic crisis in Israel and this led to some Jews exploiting the weakness and vulnerability of their fellow Jews. In these difficult times the poorer Jews had to seek loans from the powerful Jews and pay them interest that they could not afford. In some cases family members had been sold into slavery. Nehemiah was (a) categorical that what had been done was wrong (b) confronted those who were behaving improperly and (c) ensured that those who were in the wrong changed their behaviour. Is this the type of Christian leadership that we need in our own age?

A prayer for the week

LORD thank you that you know what is best for the whole of our lives and the lives of those around us. May we be salt and light in the post “Credit Crunch world”. In so doing help us to share your good news with those around us so that your will may truly be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Money Matters finance tip

It is estimated that even for those who have previously changed their gas and electricity supplier eight out of ten could make further savings by switching again. If a family has never switched who their supplier is the average saving is £250 per year. And don’t forget you can ask for a water meter rather than pay water rates. It is said that this usually leads to savings where there are fewer people in a household than there are bedrooms.

A Money Matters Question

One question we have asked is ‘What should the Christian view to bankruptcy be?’ To make bankruptcy so easy seems to offer an equally easy way for someone to escape their responsibilities. But the Christian faith is about giving someone a second chance - why should this not be as much about their material state as their spiritual state? Bankruptcy will never be an entirely easy option. It carries a stigma and life as a bankrupt has its own financial problems. More than this, as we have seen, the Old Testament Law required that loans be written off every seven years – which is, in one way, similar to what happens under bankruptcy. It is also interesting that Jesus told the story of the unforgiving servant in Matthew Chapter 18 in which the King was prepared to show generosity and cancel his official’s debts. What the King could not stand however, was double standards. Where mercy is shown a change in behaviour and attitude is expected.

To help us not forget what we have already covered.....

The Money Matters Assignment

For us to summarise (from the Money Matters sessions) the ways in which we believe that as a Church we can better deal with money matters in order to:

- Grow in our understanding of God;
- Support one another in financially difficult times;
- Develop a distinctive Christian lifestyle; and
- Reach out to those in financial need in the wider community around us.

The Money Matters quiz

How many song titles can you come up with which have a monetary theme? You need to list the artist and the song. Entries must be submitted by Sunday 19 July 2009 and the winner will be announced in our final Session on Sunday 26 July!