# Gratitude - For richer, for poorer

***Exodus 16 – the lesson from Manna*** *(or a baguette)*

* ***Not too much***
* ***Not too little***
* ***Work to collect it***

***Proverbs 30:8-9***

*Keep falsehood and lies far from me;*

*give me neither poverty nor riches but give me only my daily bread.*

*Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’*

*Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.*

***The dangers of riches (or prosperity)***

***Material blessings are gifts from a generous God***

* ***James 1:17***
* ***1 Timothy 6:17***
* Every good gift comes from God. However God does ***not*** promise material prosperity.

***Riches can suffocate gratitude***

* ***Deuteronomy 8:10-20***
* ***Psalm 52:7***
* We forget God and make riches our stronghold, so that our confidence, trust and contentment is placed in what we possess rather than who possesses us.

***Prosperity can be the doorway to sin***

* ***Daniel 4:28-37***
* ***2 Samuel 11:1-5***
* ***Revelation 3:14-22***
* It causes us to lose our spiritual perception of what is important to the Lord.

***The dangers of poverty (adversity)***

***Poverty is often a difficult experience***

* ***Psalm 73:2-3***
* the wealth of others causes us to stumble.
* ***2 Timothy 4:10***
* longings for wealth may cause us to fall away.

***Poverty makes us lose sight of what is eternally important***

* ***Revelation 2:8-11***
* We need to remember what Jesus thinks of us.

***Two Quick Antidotes***

## An antidote to the danger of wealth is to give generously

***An antidote to poverty is the sharing of need with those who love Jesus***

***Godliness with contentment - Philippians 4***

***Joy is the hallmark of a Christian (v4)***

* ***Galatians 5:22-23***
* ***Nehemiah 8:10***
* Joy gives us credibility, energy and magnetism.

***Our Joy is in the Lord (v4)***

* ***Phil 1:21***, ***Phil 2:5, Phil 3:7-11***, ***Phil 4:13***
* ***Acts 16:25***
* Even in challenging times, Paul never lost sight of his joy in Jesus, which shaped his life and attitude.

# Pray about all your needs (v6)

* ***John 14:1,27***
* ***2 Kings 19 :14***
* Trust that God hears and answers prayers, and has promised to give us all we need.

***Find God’s peace in Christ (v7)***

* ***1 Peter 5:7***
* ***Matthew 11:28***
* ***Psalm 26:3***
* Turn your worry list into a prayer list because God cares for you. Do this with others in the church.

# Think on the right things (v8)

* ***Romans 12:1-2***
* ***1 Peter 1:13***
* You can control what you think about – develop holy habits of thanksgiving.

# Cultivate a contented and thankful heart (vv10-13)

* Be satisfied with Jesus
* Learn to hold things lightly
* Contentment is worth its weight in gold

**Questions**

* In what ways can prosperity suffocate gratitude?
* 1 Timothy 6:17 says, ‘Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.’ How can we make sure we enjoy God’s gifts but not put our hope in them?
* How does poverty, or even just having less that those around us, have the potential to damage our spiritual life (if we let it!)?
* Why are godly relationships fundamental to our contentment?
* How can we discipline our mind to develop gratitude?
* In what way is generosity a defence against the pitfalls of poverty and prosperity?

**Reflections**

* Instead of worrying about your troubles, follow Hezekiah’s example and lay them out before the Lord (2 Kings 19:14). Speak to God about your concerns then leave them with him. Make a deliberate choice to trust God rather than worry.
* ‘Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth’ (Psalm 52:7). What strongholds do you have? In whom or what do find your security? Pray that more and more God would be your stronghold. Pray with King David: ‘I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold’ (Psalm 18:1-2).
* Rejoice because you have received the greatest gift of all – God himself. Circumstances may change but you will always have God and that makes you rich beyond all measure: ‘For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich’ (2 Corinthians 8:9).