

15 - Principles for Living in God's Economy

by Ben Torrey

Ben Torrey explores the principles of living in God's economy, including faith financing and the significance of the Three Seas Project.

Duration: 9:05

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 2:37, Ephesians 3:20, Ephesians 4:28, 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

Topics: "Faith Missions"

Description

In this sermon, Ben Torrey discusses the concept of faith financing and how it relates to the work of Jesus Abbey. He emphasizes the importance of depending on God for provision and shares personal experiences of God's miraculous provision in his own life. Torrey also highlights the principle of helping others and fundraising for the Three Seas Project, which aims to spread the gospel and assist those in need. He references biblical passages that emphasize the importance of honest labor, generosity, and meeting the needs of others.

Transcript

This is Ben Torrey with you once again. Last week I spoke about living on faith, faith missions, and Jesus Abbey's policy that came to be known as faith financing. I spoke of the many heroes of the faith who depended totally on God for their provision as they went about the work of preaching the gospel, caring for orphans, the poor and the needy, pastoring churches and the like.

Indeed, God has shown abundantly time and time again that he is more than able to provide exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or imagine. As Paul writes in Ephesians 3.20, I am a witness to God's miraculous and overabounding provision in my own life and that of my family both growing up at Jesus Abbey and in the years since. I also know how specific, practical and accurate God is in his provision for us.

I've also learned through the years that God has more ways of dealing with, using and providing for his people than we can think of. God is infinitely creative. I would say that for the vast majority of people God intends that they earn their livings through the work of their own hands and mind.

Indeed, St. Paul is very blunt in 2 Thessalonians 3.10-12. Again, he wrote in Ephesians 4.28, This is such a good passage because it calls for honest labor for the one who is a thief. It also recognizes that there are those who legitimately have a need that should be met by others. And finally, it makes it clear that the

one who labors should also be generous to the one who needs.

Three very important principles wrapped up in one short sentence. Of course, there are many passages about care for the destitute, the widows and orphans. There are also instructions to care for the widows who have responsibility to guide the younger women and to intercede for others before God.

This was an ancient practice among the Jews. Indeed, we read in Luke 2.37 of Anna, the aged widow who never left the temple, but spent her time in fasting and prayer, who recognized the infant Jesus as the Savior and gave praise to God. From these passages and many others we know that God calls certain individuals to the work of full-time ministry, prayer, missions, care for others, and so forth, who are not at the same time to earn their living through their own labor.

God usually provides for these through the greater number of those whom He has called to work for their income. And He blesses them with abundance so that they may be His instruments of provision for others. This is God's way, and all of it is holy.

As I pointed out last week, it should all be done as living by faith. Everything comes from God, whether it is miraculous provision or ability to earn money that He gives us in circumstances that favor our gaining wealth. I ended my comments last week by stating that I would be turning faith financing on its head this week.

What do I mean? Well, first let's review briefly what we normally mean by faith financing. This is the term that is applied in Korean, **■ ■ ■ ■**, to the way that Jesus Abbey, our Christian community in Taebaek, Gangwon-do, operates. Under this principle, the Abbey does not publicize its needs or seek to raise funds.

Instead, the community prays to God for Him to provide, seeing the time and manner of provision as God's guidance for steps that the community is supposed to take. This principle is applied to the individuals and families that make up the community of Jesus Abbey in their own lives. Now comes a major departure, and we see that the ways of God are many and often surprising.

Over 30 years ago, God, through an amazing set of circumstances that I won't go into tonight, provided a tract of mountain pastureland to Jesus Abbey for raising livestock. This land was leased from the forestry department for that purpose only. The Abbey soon came to realize that this land has significant spiritual meaning, especially in regards to its location.

It lies at the convergence of all of Korea's watersheds. The rain that falls on this land, depending on exactly where it falls, will flow eventually into either the East Sea, the West Sea, or the South Sea. The sources of both the Nakdong River flowing to Busan and the Han River flowing through Seoul are nearby, within the city limits of Taebaek.

On a clear day, we can see the East Sea. This land is now called the Three Seas Ranch, or in Korean, the Samsuryong, literally Three Waters Pass, Ranch. My father saw this as being very important, for as the waters flowed from this site to the surrounding seas, the oceans, the Word of God and the grace of the Holy Spirit would flow from there into all the world.

His dream was to build a training center for missions on this location. This became a possibility some years ago when a new law came into effect for the Taebaek region. This law provided for the release of government land for development purposes.

Under this law, the Abbey applied for permission to build a training center. I will speak more about this in a future broadcast. For our purposes tonight, it is enough to know that this would be an enormous undertaking, costing a great deal of money.

Remember that my father, in prayer, established the policy for Jesus' Abbey that they would ask God alone to supply their physical needs, not raising funds or even letting others know about any need that they might have. Well, for the Three Seas Project, as it came to be known, he changed that policy significantly. He determined that for this work, it would be acceptable to let people know what the need was and to seek outside support.

Of course, he and the Abbey continued to pray for provision from God, whether it be direct and seemingly miraculous or through fundraising efforts. But what of the way of faith? What happened to faith financing? After all, George Mueller built five large orphanages and many other great works without asking for a penny from men. Hudson Taylor built the China Inland Mission on this principle.

Why this major departure? I don't know that my father understood all of God's purposes in this, but I do know that he was a man who sought and got his guidance from the Lord through the Holy Spirit and that he was obedient to this. So if he said this was what was to be done, it was because the Lord made it clear to him. His explanation was that the work of the Three Seas Project was not for the benefit of Jesus' Abbey or its members.

It was for the purposes of spreading the Gospel and helping others. Since this was so, a request to others for help was not asking for their own needs, but for the needs of others. This was always acceptable.

In fact, my father often did bring the needs of others to people's awareness and encouraged them to help out. This was also a strong principle of his, that the strong should help the weak. So this concept fit his understanding quite well.

Fundraising for the Three Seas was encouraging others to meet special needs and that the Abbey was simply the vessel that God wanted to use to meet those needs. This fit within the framework of faith. This fit within the framework of faith financing, but also expanded it a bit.

Next week, however, I will give you the rest of the story and how it gets even stranger, at least from our perspective. Stay tuned. Good night.

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