

Thought for the Day 9th September - John Reed

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-19

Many years ago, when I was playing the clarinet seriously, I decided one day that my clarinet needed a good clean out. I won't go into the unpleasant detail of what ends up inside a clarinet after years of blowing and spluttering down it. Suffice to say my teacher once told me that it was actually good for me, since it was growing penicillin! Not convinced that it actually *was* good for me, I decided to give the whole thing a good soaking in disinfectant. Which no doubt killed a lot of the germs festering in there. But it also, unfortunately, both changed the colour of the clarinet from black to green, and also softened all the glue that held the cork pads in place that sit under the keys and seal the holes when you press down on them! The cork could be replaced (at some expense), but the green colour was there to stay.

A costly lesson to learn.

But not as costly as the decision made by one South Korean recently to launder their money. That's not launder as in finding ways to render illegally gained money unidentifiable and therefore reusable (which I know nothing about!), but as in literally laundering in the washing machine (which I do know a little about). Apparently concerned that there might be coronavirus on their bank notes, this enterprising person decided to run them through the washing machine (presumably on the "COVID-killing setting").¹ Unfortunately, it turns out that washing machines are no good for Korean bank notes (anyone know how Australian currency fares?), and a significant proportion of the money was rendered unusable. The good news is that the Bank of Korea does offer an exchange program for damaged notes. The bad news is that apparently they only exchange old for new at half value -and also that some of the notes were deemed so badly damaged as to be not fit for exchange.

All-in-all, an expensive decision.

What's the most expensive decision you've ever made?

We worry a lot about money. And quite understandably. So what does God have to say about it?

I've heard people suggest that God doesn't concern himself with vulgar, mundane things like money. He's only concerned with whether we love him, and our neighbour. He's concerned that we read the Bible, and not so much about reading our bank account. The reality is, however, that the Bible says a lot about money. I was interested to see this article in Forbes magazine a few years ago called "Is the Bible the Ultimate Financial Guide?", in which Peter Grandich, author of *Confessions of a Wall Street Whiz Kid* as saying: "I get my financial advice from the Bible ... Money and possessions are the second most referenced topic in the Bible."² The Bible talks a lot about money. Jesus talked a lot about money.

¹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/bank-of-korea-money-laundering_n_5f244161c5b656e9b09b1022

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sherylncancenash/2012/05/24/is-the-bible-the-ultimate-financial-guide/#4772202b6493>

And here, Paul talks about money. And he offers us some investment advice, which I'm sure is based on what Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-20. Paul's advice (or Jesus' instruction which Paul is quoting) here in verses 17-19 is that rather than set our hopes on the uncertainty of worldly riches (which are all too easily lost in washing machines), we should instead store up treasure in heaven. And when we do that, when we cling less tightly to our worldly wealth, we can free ourselves up to let it go, by using it for doing good and being generous towards the needs of others.