

Our “Money Life”

By Davis Fisher

How does my money life influence how I live out my Baptismal Covenant?

Since at baptism our mission in Christ is launched, we can say that Christianity as a way-of-life begins with this rite. At the core of this mission is the day-to-day living out of our Baptismal Covenant. As we grow in age and maturity, the formation and application of our mission in Christ evolves.

Although we often see our Christian mission through the lens of our life at church, the reality is that our baptismal mission is intended to permeate *all* aspects of our lives. We don't just have a religious/spiritual life; our lives have many dimensions, including home life, work life, community life, and leisure life, to name a few, and all are areas for our mission in Christ.

Can we add money life to this list? By money life, I don't mean just how much money we set aside to donate to the church and to charitable activities as *part* of our income. When I talk about money life, I mean *all* of our income. All the money that's available to us is a critical dimension of our baptismal mission.

Jesus sets a good precedent for us about the importance of our money life. In the Gospels, one sixth of Jesus' statements are about money, and one third of his parables are about money. In these statements and parables, Jesus is not talking just about giving money to the church or charities (although that certainly is important!) Jesus is talking about the challenges we face *living* with money. It's not so much about *how much* we have as it is about what we *do* with what we have. It's about the role money plays in all aspects of our lives.

How we live with our money is profoundly important to the welfare of our lives in Christ. At our baptism, we promise that we will persevere in resisting evil. In the First Letter to Timothy, we read that the love of money is the root of all evil. That kind of love we must resist!

We may *think* that we don't love money, but what do our *actions* say about us? Ask yourself this perceptive question: Am I in charge of my money – or is my money in charge of me? What role does your money play in your relationships, behavior, and decisions? Consider this question in the context of your religious/spiritual life – and also in the context of your home life, work life, community life, and leisure life. Do you own your money – or does your money own you?

Every time we renew our Baptismal Covenant we vow that, with God's help, we will:

Continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers.

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*Proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ.
Seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves.
Strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.*

As we strive to honor these vows, inevitably money issues will arise. When this happens, ask yourself: *How does my money life influence how I live my Baptismal Covenant?*

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Resources

St. Luke's Episcopal Church stewardship resources
<http://www.stlukesevanston.org/stewardship.php>

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