

Feb 26 1953 P.M

"LIVING ON A BALANCED BUDGET"

Judges 11:35

INTRODUCTION:

Are you living on a balanced budget? Or, are you living in the red ink? The victim of deficit living.

It seems everyone, even beggars have trouble with this. One stopped to a lady's door and said, "Please give the blind, poor, old man a dollar." Whined the ragged person at the kitchen door. Poor old blind man, said the lady. Why, you can see out of one eye. Well, then, give me 50¢.

The President is now in the grips of trying to balance a budget. The national budget has been in the core of politics since the last President was in office.

A school boy was making a speech about the national debt, and he said, it is too bad that future generations cannot be here at this time. To see the magnificent things that we are doing. *with thin money*

Inflation has changed things. Now, one person can live as cheaply as two used to live.

*Great Depression 1930's - average belt size of man was 31 inches  
Now - Belt Man's average size 34"*

Now living on a budget is the same as living beyond your means - except that you have a record of it. A woman said to her husband, well, at last - I have a budget that is balanced and that works. He asked her how she arrived at the truth.

She said, "It was just a simple matter of ignoring miscellaneous."

April is always a difficult month for Americans - even if your ship comes in. The I. R. S. is right there to help you unload it.

Some folks call their bank to get their balance. All I do is just shake mine!

As a background text for this message Jephthah says these words in Judges 11:35. I have opened my mouth to the Lord and I cannot go back. He had made in V. 30 a rash promise to God. That (if) God would give him military victory over Israel, on the field of battle - he would sacrifice to God on an altar that which first met him when he returned from battle. His (daughter) met him.

Now it is not my purpose tonight to discuss the controversy around this story - whether or not she was actually sacrificed. The main point that I would like to bring is this. While we may criticize the man, for the rashness of his words, we must have respect for him. Taking seriously any promise made to God.

Too many marriage vows made to God in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are soon forgotten in the divorce courts.

Church membership vows to attend the services of the church. To work for its purity, its prosperity, are quickly forgotten.

Promises made to train up a baby born - in the nurture, admiration of the Lord, to instruct the child in the principles of our Christian faith - as taught in the Word of God are also soon forgotten.

Why is it that people go back after thus opening their mouths unto the Lord.

Now the Bible tells us that one of the marks of the last days will be people "going back on God." In the last days, some will depart from the faith. Giving heed to seducing spirits. Doctrines of Devils. Speaking lies - having their conscience seered. I Tim. 4:1-2.

The Apostle Paul tells us there will come a time when people will not endure sound doctrine. They will turn away their ears from the truth - and turn to fables. They will have itching ears, and heap to themselves teachers who tell them what they want to hear. Rather than what they need to hear.

Matt. 24:12 Jesus said, because iniquity shall abound - the love of many shall wax cold. That is another mark for the last days.

Now does this happen over night. Is it a subtle process that takes place in the life of the believer. His spiritual budget gets out of balance and he starts to live in the red ink.

His spiritual outgo exceeds his spiritual income. Finally the deficit catches up

with him and he turns away from God and the Christian life. Is this what happens.

Certainly, it doesn't happen over night. It is a matter of gradual deterioration. Year in and year out - our deficit follows another deficit and for awhile - he seemingly gets by with it.

Then suddenly, catastrophe - reproach to the name of Christ. The name of the Lord Jesus is dragged in the dirt by someone who has opened his mouth to the Lord, and then went back on the promise made to God.

Now how do you live on a balanced budget. How do you keep it in balance.

There are only two major ways to balance a budget. No. 1 - cut down on your expenses. No. 2 - increase your income. Or maybe both. There isn't any other legitimate way to get the desired results. If you are going to balance the budget in your family, in your church, anywhere - you have to follow the facts. Increase the income or cut the expenses.

There is a good illustration on this - and a man by the name of Demas. Three times he is spoken of by Paul.

Col. 4:14 - Paul calls him my (fellow laborer.)

Phil. 24 - He writes, Demas (greet you.)

3 2 Tim. 4:10. Some years later, he writes the sad words. Demas (hath forsaken) me, having loved this present world.

Now what happened between these references. I suggest to you that Demas' spiritual budget got out of balance. The out go exceeded the income. He started to live in the red and the world to which he thought he had been permanently crucified, had lost its attraction - suddenly became attracted to him all over again. And he turns his back on Christ, on Paul, on the church, on God. He was overcome by the world.

Now there are other people that Paul illustrates about the same experience. He says they have gone ship-wrecked concerning the faith. What an expression. They have busted the budget - instead of balancing it. (Paul) had been through three ship wrecks - one of which he tells about in great detail. In searching through his story, he describes how it happened. And how some people who once walked with the Lord, in the ways of the Lord. But he says, they have gone shipwreck, concerning the faith.

The French luxury liner, (Normandy), after it burned at the dock in New York some years ago, was in ruins. A hull half buried in the sand. It is sad to have been a sad sight. That some people had never seen. Those who had once walked on the decks on days of crossing the Atlantic felt the tragedy keenly.

We had a ship wreck off our coast here a few weeks ago. What a sad sight - the mask, the super structure gone. And gulls flying above. And the waves breaking over the wreck. In a mournful sound - it is the story of an unreached port. Of a lost cargo of abandoned hope. And a loss of life. Paul gives this as a description of some men.

Who had walked with him in the ways of Christ - but had suffered ship wreck.

How can this be prevented. How can a man get his spiritual budget and keep it balanced. Let us consider some of the (expense) side of the ledger. What is it that drains away the strength in spiritual battle.

1 - First, (the cares of this life.) Our Lord Jesus, Matt. 13, said - the cares of the world choke the word and you become unfruitful.

The Lord Jesus rebuked Martha for being cumbered about by much servicing, and not choosing the better part. Of sitting at his feet and learn of him.

Jesus is saying, there is nothing in this world to build up the inner man, or the heart - and there is an awful lot in this world to tear it down. The Lord Jesus is saying, just to be in the world, just to have your daily rounds and responsibilities, in your home, at your business, at your work. Just meeting people - dealing with people. Facing problems, puts a drain on a spiritual man.

At the same time, there is nothing in what he has done that day that builds him up. But there is much to tear him down. That is what this world is like. That is what Jesus said. You must have a compensation, you must have an inflow to take on the expenses, the cares of this day, and of this life.

2 Second, (pleasures of the world.) He said, the pleasures of this world choke the word.

You have heard the phrase "pleasures of this world" - you may immediately think now he is talking about "off-limits". Pleasures you can get involved in. The kind that are of the flesh - of this world.

I am not really sure that Jesus had this totally in mind. There are many legitimate pleasures held in proper proportion which can be used as servants and not allowed to become our Masters. But when they get out of proportion, they can drain the spiritual life and leave you dry.

So lets not say this debit is some obviously sinful, tainted pleasure. Which we want nothing to do with. There are perfectly legitimate pleasures -- hobbies, sports, recreation, activities. Which can get such a hold over you - that the time and energy, and thinking that you give them, is all out of proportion to what you give God. They choke your spiritual life. The good becomes the enemy of the best.

A professor at Wheaton College used to line his children up every morning before leaving for school. And recite I John 2:15-17 Love not the things in the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the private life - is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth forever. "

I John 2:15-17. It is something that you might try on your children. It is so easy in a world like ours, to spiritually wither and die on the vine. And it is that we get to the place where we are, or we lose our usefulness as far as God is

concerned. And our budget goes into the red.

3 - Third, (things). Now this is something that Jesus often spoke about. (The deceitfulness of riches.) The rich (fool) said I have so much goods - what will I do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger barns. I will lay up these goods - and will say to my soul - soul, thou hast much goods layed up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. God said to him that night, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of Thee.

A man's (life) doesn't consist in the abundance of things that he possesses. There have been (many) Christians engaged in things, and in getting nicer things. That have given themselves to attain the wherewith all to get them - until they have spiritually died by the wayside. It is so easy to happen.

A Preacher one time said, (if) you are trying to keep up with the (Jones') - it might be smart to find out where the Jones' are going. They may (not) be going the same place as you are. I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back.

4 Fourth, (your Christian responsibilities.) This is the fourth expense on the debit side of the ledger. Your responsibility in (four) areas. We could discuss them. (first), in your home. (Second), in your church. (Third) in your community. And (fourth) in your nation. Every one has civic, community, and national responsibilities. You cannot fulfill your Christian responsibility without it costing you something in spiritual energy. And you can't have spritual prosperity through deficit living. Anymore than



you can have national material prosperity, by deficit financing. As some of our leaders would have us believe in the past decades. It cannot be done.

→ Now let me ask you something. If we are going to balance our spiritual budget - and if one method is to cut expenses. Where are you going to make the cuts in these areas I have mentioned.

1 - First, concerning the (cares of this life) Well, I don't think so. Life is made up and built so that we have to share the cares and the responsibilities of this world. And it is not really easy to make a cut there. You can't cut that out of the budget.

2 - Second, the (pleasures of this world) Now, you could possibly make a cut there.

3 - Third, (things) There are many things that you need. And you might cut out some of these.

4 Fourth, (Christian responsibility) Now do you want to make a cut there. Dare we cut there. In a world like this. In a world or an America like Sodom and Gomorrah. Moving fastly down the road to divine judgement. Cut down at this hour, God forbid.

I heard a Preacher express this one time. A man came to him and said, I would like to talk to you. And so he began to talk. And he unraveled the story that every

Preacher has heard. Well, you know Preacher, down at the plant they are shifting things around. They are re-organizing. And I am being moved up into a different area of responsibility with a whole brand new job to learn. And for awhile, I am going to be busy until I get the adjustments fully made.

I've got to (cut down) somewhere - so here is my resignation as a Sunday School Teacher. As a member of this committee in the church. Or as a Deacon.

Now don't get me wrong, sometimes this may be perfectly right and proper. But I cannot conceive of a situation where that might have to be - it might have to be (temporarily) done. In order to do your job unto Christ. You will please excuse me if I say, that I must confess to you that I would be a little suspicious and feel like saying wait a minute. Have you checked out all of the other expense items in your budget. Why does God have to take the cut. Why don't you cut back somewhere else. How is the rest of your time and money being used. How is your energy being expended, in other ways. What are you doing for yourself.

Of Solomon it is said, that he spent seven years building the house of the Lord. But 13 years building his own house. I Kings 6:38, 7:1. Now I think that ought to be checked out. Why does the Lord Jesus Christ have to take all of the cuts in our schedule, in our budget. There must be some other area where things or self can be omitted. Rather than things for Him.

Often people make the cuts - it is in favor of self. We have people in our church who go around from time to time, and it is not because of their age either. They are able young adults who are giving less time to the Lord's work. Than they were five or

ten years ago. Their abilities, their talents and know how are not available to God. They are cutting down on expenses all right - but I think they are cutting in the wrong places.

Now we have talked about the things that drain your budget. And the next few moments, I want to briefly say a word what about the (income) in the budget. It looks really hopeless as you think about these things that are going to take away from your budget. But what other alternative do we have. We can raise our income - how are we going to do that.

Let me suggest a (couple) of ways in which we can raise the income.

First, (worship) Now I think this needs to be brought out. This refers to your private worship, your public worship. With God's people publicly, in fellowship with one another - working together.

There are some people who profess to be (born-again) Christians (who) just cannot fellowship with God's people. They cannot even forgive God's people when they think they have been wronged.

Years ago, the arch bishop of Canterbury (William Temple) broadcast a message. Here is what he said. "I am supposed to begin with what people think will be a quite outrageous statement. This world can be saved from political caos and collapse by only one thing - and that is worship. For to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open up the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."

I would think on that definition that we would have to agree with the arch bishop.  
Fellowship with the Lord.

Pascal, the great Frenchman said, that all the trouble in the world is due to the fact that man could not sit long enough in the quietness of a room. He must go out and hunt, chatter, and work, and even gamble.

Roger Babson after much research, finally said - I have not found, or been able to find a single useful institution in America that has not been founded either by an intensely religious man, or by the son of a praying father or mother. How about that statement.

The matter of our own personal and public worship and fellowship with God, through Jesus Christ, is income.

We recharge our batteries, we build up the inner man of the heart. We get it ready for the drain on the soul through the week - every day. If you don't want to live in the red, how important this is. You need to meditate, to browse over it, to meditate and pray about it. The Psalmist said that God's blessed man delights in the law of the Lord. And he meditates on it day and night. And when he does that, he'll be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. And puts forth fruit in season. His leaf shall not wither. And whatsoever he doth shall prosper.

Are you a withered, dried-up Christian. It has been said, that some Christians are like an (old country pump). That old hand pump freezes up in the winter. And dries

up in the summer. And you can't get a drop of water out of it at any season.

Worship speaks about true income. And if we are going to be impressed by God's truth, this will help us, when there are depressions in our spiritual budget. Even Jesus said, I have meat to eat that you know not of. When you are busy about the Lord's business, witnessing for him, that is the way God ordained it.

2 - Second, (stewardship). Now you may think that is on the red side - that is going out. But I wouldn't be too sure about that. Some people never grow spiritually. Until they quit being stingy financially.

A Preacher in Toronto several years ago said - if people don't love the Lord Jesus Christ 10¢ worth, out of every dollar - they don't love him very much.

I read an amusing thing about a Pastor who said that a young fellow came in and said (I am a spend thrift). I throw my money around right and left. In the morning service, I want you to pray that I may be cured of this habit. To which the Preacher said, yes, my boy - I'll agree to pray. But the prayer will come right after the offering.

There was a man once who worked in a repair shop. He lived for wine, women, and song. Someone asked him how much he spent on some of these ventures. Oh he said, \$50 or \$60. Do you know why that man does that. It is because he loves his sin. And we stand up and sing (My Jesus I Love Thee). But what do we do about it.

The world loves its sin and will spend hard cash on it.

Do you want to grow up spiritually - learn to give to God's work. Some people give less to the Lord than they invest in magazines. You just count it up and you would be shocked on what you are spending on junk compared to what you are giving to the Lord's work. That is why people are in the red or are very close to it. It is why their budget it out of balance. They open their mouths to the Lord in a promise but there is no power to make it good. They open their mouth in sincerity - but under the pressures of this world, they never really are ready for a crisis.

3- Third, and finally (how about a rainy day.) Now we have been talking about balancing the budget, and I have suggested some things. Oh, we could add others and you probably could add some points to it. But let me ask you something do you really think that balancing the budget is good enough. How about the rainy day. You'd like to set aside for.

It is not just good enough to barely be in the black. That is where people make mistakes. In balancing the budget in their finances in their home. They say, well, we got this all paid, etc. And they live up to the last dime. And they don't have anything left for a rainy day. There are lots of people who have the same idea about the church. They think the church, all the income of the church, ought to be spent. Every dime and the church ought to stay in the red - in debt. But what about the emergencies that come. What about drawing on the spiritual man.

Peter Marshall said, life's emergencies do not come with screaming sirenes.

And flashing red lights. They just leap on you when you turn a corner in life. And if you are not ready for them there is no time to get ready. You should have a surplus for a rainy day.

There have been many Christians who seem to get along reasonably well under ordinary conditions. Suddenly, like a bolt out of the blue - a child or a husband or wife is snatched away out of the home. And here you stand by the casket. And what about your Christian faith. There are those who turn in bitterness against God. They have no surplus to draw on. They'll find themselves unable to say with Job -  
"the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

It is not enough to live from day to day. This is a world of crisis. The clouds are gathering - they are getting darker. And it all points to the time when God will deal with this world in His wrath. And there are people today who are throwing rocks or don't have much use for Preachers anymore. Some people don't have much use for churches. Or for Christians in general. Don't kid yourself. How about the evil day. How about building up a surplus.

"I have opened my mouth to the Lord and I cannot go back."

But you will, unless you are living on a surplus basis. Just living in the black is not enough. It is important to prepare for the evil day. And when it comes, we may be able to stand by God's grace.

If we are living dangerously near the red ink budget, let us today hear and now draw near to God in repentance. Seek his help and try to get on a balanced budget

with a surplus in it.

Solomon surpassed all the Kings of Earth  
in riches but ~~Sp.~~ Budget out  
of balance.