

Though **v. 8** is our primary text, we would do injustice to the passage to not consider **v. 7** for these two are clearly connected, speaking of the rich and poor. What **v. 7** reveals is that material riches ultimately amount to nothing. It is the realization of this truth which prompts the man described in the second part of the verse to live as though materially poor. The implication here per the language of the KJV is that this man is poor due to a conscious decision: "maketh himself poor". It reads a little differently in other translations. The ESV, for example, says "pretends to be poor". But I think the point is the same in both. This person chooses to have little because his treasure is not earthly. He lives as though poor, distributing what he has since he has more than needed. He lives as the Lord instructed the rich, young ruler to live in **Mar 10:21**. "Sell it all, give it to the poor, and you'll have eternal treasure in heaven." Why did Jesus instruct him this way? To hurt him? Because he delighted in the thought of this man suffering? No. Per the text, b/c He loved him! It was the best course of action for him! His trust was misplaced. His hope was a temporary one as seen in **Pro 23:4-5**: "Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." So, with these thoughts in mind, let's consider our verse:

"The ransom of a man's life are his riches..."

Some commentators deemed this to be a benefit of riches. The rich can get out of trouble through the use of their money. That's what happened in **Jer 41:1-8** when Ishmael assassinated Gedaliah, the man the king of Babylon had appointed governor over Judah, and killed many other men during that raid. Ten men escaped death during this massacre, purchasing their lives with riches they had hid in the fields. (**v. 8**)

However, I think based on the previous text in **Pro 13**, we are to consider in **v. 8** the danger of riches. The point here is that if you have riches, others want it. It can have hold over you. You can be controlled by it. We know how ransom works. Maybe the most famous ransom case in America was the kidnapping of Charles Lindbergh Jr, son of Charles Lindbergh who was famous for making the first nonstop flight across the Atlantic. The kidnappers demanded \$70,000, equivalent to over \$1 million today, and when the money was paid, the toddler was not returned. The child was later found dead near the Lindbergh's home, and it was suspected that he had accidentally been killed during the kidnapping. The point is, Charles Lindbergh would've never gone through that ordeal had he not had riches.

Riches are a powerful agent used by the enemy to hold sway over us. They can be used to direct our lives down paths we wouldn't choose otherwise.

Balaam was nearly killed in **Num 22:15-33** because he went with Balak's men even though the Lord had only granted him permission to go IF they came to call on him the next morning (**v. 20**). Balaam didn't wait to see what they would do. He's up at the crack of dawn saddling his donkey to go with them! Why? What was at stake? The riches and honor promised him in **v. 17**! The NT tells us clearly what was at the heart of Balaam's sin in **Jud 11**. He had a greedy heart bent on making a profit! The possibility of losing the riches Balak had to offer was unthinkable to Balaam, and so his greed was an easy tool in the hand of the enemy to lead him astray.

Now contrast the rich man's circumstances with that of the poor man:

"...but the poor heareth not rebuke."

If you have nothing for them to take away, they can't hold it over you! You can't be manipulated. They can threaten all day long to take this or that away if you act contrary to what they desire, but for a man who has nothing to lose, those threats have no power!

Here is the testimony of the ones satisfied in Christ alone:

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

How are you going to threaten such an individual? No wonder the disciples responded to the council as they did in **Act 5:27-29**. You realize that by their response, most of the Jews wanted to kill them, right?! (**v. 33**) But God intervened, causing a man to speak on their behalf though we have no record that he was really on their side. Their obedience in spite of the Jews' threats gave them opportunity to praise God for sovereignly preserving them! How could they be so bold? They had nothing to lose. Even if the Jews had taken their lives, they would have benefited. And so these crazy disciples, though beaten before being set free, went away rejoicing to suffer for Christ's sake! (**v. 40-41**) And the rebuke they had been given to no longer teach in Jesus' name, they went right back to doing it! (**v. 42**)

What do you NEED? Job said he had to hear from God more than even participating in that which is NECESSARY for life! "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." (**Job 23:12**)

So, I would ask this soul-searching question to each one here: What are you afraid of losing? Is there ANYTHING besides the Lord Himself that you can't do without? I would draw your attention back to **Pro 13:7**. You may be rich and have much and that can be ok IF you live as though it's yours to give away because you only need little. Remember the Lord's teaching in **Luk 21:1-4**. The rich were giving, but the giving the Lord recognized was the woman who gave what hurt to give. The rich that gave a little of their riches had much they feared to lose. She, however, had nothing to lose because she willingly gave it all away! You know, we only consider this woman to be poor because we assume her circumstances led to that. She was a widow, so we assume her to have little due to the loss of her husband. But it's possible, based on **Pro 13:7**, that her husband had been wealthy and left her much to care for herself. It's possible that she was a "poor widow" because she made herself poor! Was she going to be okay? Well, the Savior of the world fixed His attention on her instead of the others. I'd say she was going to be alright! See Christ and Macedonia's example. (**2Co 8:9, 1-3**) as Paul urged Corinth to follow their pattern. They gave until it hurt! (the natural)

Riches will be of zero benefit when we stand before God. With all our wealth, we can provide no ransom for anyone that will save them from hell. (**Psa 49:7-9**) Riches affect churches in **Rev 3:17** cmp **2:9**! Why was it an act of love when the Lord spoke to the rich, young ruler? B/c he and "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (**Rom 14:12**) Tell me, when the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell, of what benefit were his riches? Did he think that which he enjoyed in this life to have been worth an eternity of suffering? Of course not. No one would. And so, hold what you have loosely. If it has its hold on you, let it go! The eternal reward is of far greater worth. Rather than trusting in these things that thieves can steal and moth can corrupt, trust in the Savior who alone had paid the ransom that will save a man from eternal death. Our debt is more than our riches can repay, but the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness! And we ALL know we have much unrighteousness. Read **Rom 1-3** if you don't believe me. Confess it; don't cover it up. Repent—confess your sins and turn from them, looking unto Jesus, who ALONE can satisfy God on your behalf. Close with **1Ti 6:6-11**, noting the last things can't be taken away!