The Appetite for More. If there's a single word that summarizes American hopes and obsessions that's it -- More! More money, more success, more luxuries, more gizmos. We live for more. For our next car, our next house, our next vacation. And the things we already have, however wonderful they are, pale in comparison to the things we might still get. The appetite for more characterizes the American frontier from it's beginnings. Proverbs 27:20 "Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man."

Today, we are going to talk about our quest for more. We are going to talk about priorities. What really has first place in your heart? Is it your family? Is it your friends? Is it your recreational pursuits? Is it the quest for more? Is it God? Our God tells his people and us today, I want first place in your life, and I want to be able to see the priority you give to me in your life. Consider the theme: The Appetite For More!

Money can sure turn the nicest people into total fools. A man comes to Jesus with the urgent request, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” This man is hardly listening to one word that Jesus is saying about the riches of God’s kingdom. He comes across very demanding and abrupt as he tells Jesus to talk to his brother about dividing the inheritance. This guy reminds me of a lady who came up to me after a service at Steeplechase. She told me she had been married to her second husband for 20 years, but before they got married she signed a pre-nup agreement. Now that he needs 24 hour a day care, with a caregiver constantly by his side, the trustees, his kids, won’t pay for a 2 bedroom unit. So she has to live elsewhere. Even the best of families can be ripped apart and shaken like a leaf by this ugly grizzly bear of greed.

You can almost see Jesus sigh as he comes face to face again with the corruption that exists in the human heart. He looks at the crowd and with love and compassion warns about the sin of greed. “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” The famed conquistador Pizzaro mercilessly slaughtered the ancient Incas to fill a room with gold. It has been estimated that Genghis Khan killed over 15 million people so his Mongrel hoards could satiate their lust for gold. It is easy to see how greed can destroy people and even lead them to hurt and harm others in the process, but it is more difficult to take an honest look at ourselves to uncover and unmask the sin of greed that lurks within every human heart.

Why do I always want more? What motivates me to never be satisfied with what I have? Three misconceptions that are found in our culture. Having more things will make me more happy. The ads tell us that so it must be true! There’s not any doubt about it. Here’s an ad for a car that plainly says, "You can buy happiness." The fact is, things can bring happiness. The problem is, it’s temporary. It's just for a while. Things do make you happy. If you get a gift, you're happy about it. But it doesn't last and after a while the thrill goes away and the excitement fades and boredom sets in because things never change and people change.

Having more things will make me more important. This is the idea that's promoted by shows like "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" that if I've got money, then I must be important. The misconception is, I am what I own, that my valuables determine my value, that if I have little then I must be worth little. So since I want to be liked and respected and looked up to, I must continually keep on getting more and more and more. I've got to keep up with the Jones'. Don't worry about keeping up with the Jones' -- they just refinanced. Having more things does not make me more important. It's amazing
what people will pay for a status symbol. Some people will pay $50 more for a shirt because it's got a little thing up in the corner. It's still made out of cotton. You pay $50 more for that little horse.

**Having more things will make me more secure.**"If I could just achieve financial independence..." Have you heard that one? As if that's the goal of life. The fact is, the more you have, the more insecure you can be because the more you have to worry about. The more you have, the more time and energy it takes to maintain it. The more you have, the more insurance you have to pay to insure it. I never worry about the barnacles on my yacht -- I don't have a yacht. I never worry about thieves robbing my wife’s mink. She doesn’t have one. The less you have, the less you have to worry about. You don't have to pay insurance on it and you don't have to take care of the upkeep and maintenance. The Bible says it's dumb to base your security on how much you've acquired because you can lose it all. The truth is, real security can only be found when you place your security in something that can't be taken away from you. And the only thing that cannot be taken away from you is your relationship to God.

Jesus tells us a story about a man who based his happiness, importance and security on his possessions. He says, “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’” The man struck it rich. He had such a bumper crop that he needed larger barns in which to store the grain. Barns full of grain meant he could store the grain and when the prices went up, he could get even more money. Listen to what this rich man said after he had more than enough money for his early retirement. “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” Man proposes but God disposes. The Lord God had other plans for that man’s life. “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’” A multimillionaire died in Texas, and one woman said to her friend, “I wonder how much he left behind.” She responded with dry humor, “I think he left it all behind.” You can’t take it with you. There are no pockets in shrouds. You never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul truck.

This man not only lost his money, but he also lost his soul. He made no preparations to be rich towards God with priceless treasures of God’s kingdom. Mind you, this man was religious, very religious. His god was his money. This false god of money could not spare him from his problem of sin, eternal death and punishment in hell. We are not redeemed with gold and silver but with the precious blood of Christ that was shed for us.

How can we stop this appetite for more? By throwing off the idol of materialism in our lives! How do we do that. **RESIST COMPARING WHAT I HAVE TO OTHERS** 2 Corinthians 10:12 "We do not dare classify or compare ourselves it is not wise." It's dumb. It is not smart to compare yourself to other people because God's made us all to be unique and comparing inevitably leads to coveting. Just about the time you're starting to feel good with what you've got, you look over your shoulder and somebody just got the newer model. And you got a 3000 SXQDT and the guy next to you got a 3001 SXQDT but the problem is, by the time he's bought his the company's come out with a 4001 PDQ! It's intentional. They want to keep you on the line. It is intentional. It is this constant consumer driven society that we live in and you've got to stop comparing yourself to others if you're going to get off the rat race, if you're going to get
off the track.  

2. REJOICE IN WHAT I DO HAVE  Be grateful for what you've got.  Ecclesiastes 6:9 "It is better to be satisfied with what you have than to always be wanting something else." It's a lot cheaper too.  Contentment is not a natural trait.  It must be learned. You have to learn it.  I invite you to enroll in the school of contentment. Say, "God, teach me to learn to be satisfied with what I have rather than always be wanting something else."  G. K. Chesterton says there's two ways to have enough.  One, get more. Two, desire less.  If you desire less, you can be content without having to get more.  You can get off the track.

3. The third way to throw off Materialism is FIRST-FRUIT GIVING. Give to God before all other purchases and bills from your income.  Be a percentage giver.  10% is a good foundation to work from.  If you want to break out of the consumer society there's only one antidote to materialism.  Giving.  Why?  Because it's the exact opposite of getting.  That's what materialism is -- get, get, get! Get all you can and can all you get.  The exact opposite of getting is giving.  The point is that every time you tithe, every time you do an act of generosity, every time you give, every time you sit down and write out that check, you are winning a spiritual victory over materialism.  Every time you do it.  You're saying, "I'm going to buck the flow of life that says get, get, get.  I'm going to show that my trust is in God and I'm believing that God can pay my debts if I put Him first in my life and that He is my source of supply and that He really is number one in my life.  My giving is proof of that -- my evidence."  

4. REFOCUS ON PERMANENT VALUES  
Colossians 3:2  "Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things."  Look at life from God's viewpoint.  Realize that all possessions are temporary.  Focus on what's going to last forever.  Everything material will eventually vanish.

Jesus wants us to be rich in the treasures of the kingdom. That is why he warns us about holding so tightly to our money with both hands that we let go of the treasures of his kingdom. "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

How rich are you?  Your God forgives all you sins.  You are the richest people in the world.  You know the debt of sin you accumulate in just one day of living on this earth.  You know the blood of Jesus that cleanses you from all sin.  You live each day covered with a robe of righteousness.  You are so rich towards God, because of God's grace and God's goodness and God's mercy to you.

How rich are you?  You know where you are going when you die.  You don't have to be afraid to leave it all behind because you have been redeemed from the pit.  You will not wake up some day in hell as the rich man did in the story of the rich man and poor Lazarus.  You know you have mansions waiting for you that Jesus is preparing just for you.

How rich are you? The Lord crowns you with love and compassion.  You know what is liked to be loved by God with this deep, personal, unchanging, loyal, faithful love that will never fail you.  I can be the poorest person in the world, and if I can sing "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me" then I am the richest person in the world.  You are so rich you can take the money the Lord gives you and use it to help other people learn about these treasures we have in Jesus that last forever.  Lord Jesus, help me always value the treasures of your kingdom more than I value the money you give me.  Amen.