

PASTOR SCOTT'S

MONTHLY MESSAGE



Abundant Wealth

“Crazy Rich Asians” is a recently released romantic comedy film. From the title it is difficult to discern if it is referring to “crazy, rich people”, or to folk who are just “crazy rich”? Is this about rich people who have a few screws loose, or people with an extreme overabundance of wealth? I’ll let you decide if you go see the movie.

As a romantic comedy, it focuses on the challenges of two people being in love, the obstacles/challenges to that loving relationship, and some follies that happen along the way. It is a comedy and I don’t think the movie is trying to be a commentary on wealth (and the lack thereof), though the topic does surface occasionally through the movie.

But what is it like to have such wealth that you can throw outrageous parties. There is a wedding in the movie. One character reveals the parents are spending \$40 million on that wedding. There are other “over-the-top” celebrations. The wealthy “Young” family in the movie (if they were in America, they are in Singapore—hence rich “Asians”) would most likely be at the top of Fortune magazine’s 500 Wealthiest Americans annual list. But to be even at the bottom of that list, one has to have a net worth of more than \$4 billion. To be clear, that is having over four thousand *millions*.

What if you had that sort of wealth? What would you do with it? Seriously! More *homework*; I want you to make a list of what you’d do with \$4 billion. Some simplifying assumptions: the \$4 billion is in liquid assets, readily available to spend/give, you have all \$4 billion to do whatever you’d like with.

Granted, the people at the bottom of the Fortune 500 Wealthiest don’t have \$4 billion stuffed in their mattress, or sitting around in their checking account. A lot of that wealth is wrapped up in properties, possessions, and possibly illiquid investments in private companies (not easily “cashed out” of), etc. But, a lot of that wealth is likely in relatively liquid investments like stocks, bonds, hedge funds, CDs, and a checking account (that earns more than 0.01% interest). For the sake of this exercise, let’s make the simplifying assumption that all \$4 billion of your wealth is available to be spent. What do you do?

Maybe you’d like some things, like a vacation home, or two. One on a sunny beach, one in the mountains. How much do you think such homes would cost? I’m not asking you to contact a real estate agent, just make a good guess as to what they would cost. How about a luxury car? A jet airplane? A yacht? Travel (to your two vacation homes and other places that are exciting to see)? And it up. 4,000 millions minus how ever many millions you just identified; how many millions are left—still thousands?

Another potential answer, “Leave it all invested—and live off of the earnings.” If your investments earn an average of 10% per year, that’s \$400 million annually; how would you “live” on that, what would you do with that \$400 million—each year?

As a Christian, what would you want to do with the wealth? You may still choose to spend some on yourself, but what else would you do with the thousands of millions? Be specific, don’t simply say “Give it away.” Where would you give/donate money, to whom or what. Break it down, what is important to ? As a Christian, how would your faith lead in dealing with these billions of dollars? Be free and open in your thinking. And, write it down.

I’ll give you a while to consider what you would do. What ministries are important to you? What would you support? How much? Write it down so you don’t forget; I’ll be asking you about your answers in a little while (this is homework after all).

Peace,

Pastor Scott