

Friday Night Theology, 19th September 2008.
Christ in the credit crunch

If you were in denial about the credit crunch, you surely can't be any more. The collapse of [Lehman Brothers](#) at the beginning of the week, leaving thousands unemployed, makes it very certain that the economy is headed for difficult times.

The problem in Britain though, is that we're not used to such uncertainty. Everything can be insured – our lives, homes, possessions, travel and even our pets. And should the economy take a turn for the worse, we expect the government to bail us out. The biggest shock for many with the collapse of Lehman Brothers was probably that the US government did not come running to the rescue. Compare this with life for many living in the Third World, who face uncertainty on a daily basis; war and [natural disasters](#) often destroy everything they have in moments, with no insurance and little or no government support to help them. Is this why people living in the Third World often have far greater faith and trust in God than those in the West, because they daily experience the reality of trusting in God rather than money?

Living in the Western world with all the luxuries and securities that provides, has caused us to become far too dependent on our own abilities and money to protect us. We may say that we place all our trust and security in God, but do we really mean it? Or will we still believe it if everything we've worked for is lost overnight? Jesus spells out the danger of trusting in our money very clearly in Matthew 6:19-20, yet we seem to persist in ignoring it, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."* Our securities are not yet disappearing on anything like the scale that many people around the world experience, but the message remains universal: God is the only true security.

At the same time, during periods of uncertainty our natural instinct is usually to protect our own interests, making sure that we're going to be OK. Yet surely during these difficult economic times we have a great opportunity to live differently, obeying the command of Philippians 2:4, *"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."* With [unemployment expected to double](#) by the end of 2009, help is going to be needed. I wonder what it would be like if, in a year's time for instance, the Christian community across the UK were able to say that over that year they had put aside even more money and goods in order, not to help themselves, but to help and bless those in deep financial need. We may be feeling the pinch, but this isn't an excuse for not looking out for others. Like the poor widow of Mark 12, who gave even out of her poverty, we have been called to radical Christian living, and perhaps now is our God-given opportunity to show it.

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