

27 Sept 2017

Money, money, money

read the Bible (Ps. 119:18). 3) Trust that God will supply your needs. Don't let fear drive you towards a hoarding mindset. 4) Give generously and regularly. This honours God as the most valuable "thing" in your life and keeps you free from the love of money and possessions. 5) Plan ahead. Think about what you're going to do with future increase and how you're going to keep your heart safe from the deceitfulness of wealth.

APPLICATION

What part of the teaching did you find most challenging and why?

How do I apply the Word to my life?

- Think through the 5 steps in point 3 and plan how you are going to carry them out in your daily life

PRAYER

- You may need to start by repenting of loving material possessions (or comfort etc) more than God.
- Ask God to help you to see money and possessions from his point of view and for the grace and conviction to act accordingly
- Ask God to show you how you can use your possessions (many or few) to further his kingdom – especially by bringing the lost to Christ.

NOTES

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WARM UP

If you won R5m tomorrow, what would you do with it?

WORD

"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?'

"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

Luke 12:13-21

Money, and how we use it, is quite a touchy subject – and yet Jesus had a lot to say about it. We live in a city characterised by a love of money and material possessions, and it's very easy to get caught up in the same value system. However, as Christians we are called to embrace a very different view of these things, as the man who interrupted Jesus in this passage found out.

1. THE GROUND, NOT THE MAN

The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. Verse 16

Jesus could have said, "a certain rich man produced an abundant harvest," but instead he says that "the ground" yielded the harvest – emphasizing that the crop was a result of God's grace and favour, not the rich man's labour (for it is possible to labour and produce nothing, and also, everything the man used – including his strength, all came from God). This is very important to appreciate; no matter what you have achieved and how much you have accumulated, everything comes from God and belongs to God! Without this foundational understanding about wealth and possessions, we will always struggle to live up to the Biblical value of generosity. Take time to share briefly how you got your job/business, highlighting how God was at work to make things happen for you. If you don't have a job, think about the material possessions you have and how God has provided them for you.

2. MY, MY, MY

I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. Verse 18

If God owns everything and is responsible for every blessing, then you'd expect the man to honour God by asking him how he'd like him to steward his abundant harvest. What we get instead is one of the most self-centred speeches in the entire Bible! (I will... my barns... my grain etc). This man's perspective was that everything was because of him and belonged to him to use as he wished – on his own selfish desires. You see, money is not treasure in and of itself; money enables us to acquire the things our hearts truly treasure! And in this man's case, it was pure hedonism! (eat, drink and be merry).

He had made himself the centre and failed to obey the greatest commandment to love God, and had also failed to so much as spare a thought for others. God gives us money and possessions as a means by which we can show his great worth; show how much we value him – how he is our greatest treasure, the thing we value most in this life. And guess what? We only have a short time to do this! In the parable, God tells the rich man that he'd be dead by the end of the day and so would lose everything he'd worked so hard to hoard for himself. Our time on earth may seem long, but it's not! James 4:14 says our lives are but a mist that appears briefly then is gone!

The rich man wasn't condemned for being rich (making an honest living is godly). The issue was his attitude towards money. He valued his possessions, comfort and pleasure far greater than he valued God, and in the end, he lost it all – even his life. When you consider your life as honestly as you can, do you see any similarities between you and the rich man in the parable?

3. WHAT THEN?

How can we apply this message? Here are five suggestions: 1) Read your Bible daily. Jesus is of ultimate value, but we will only perceive that when we behold him (regularly) in the Word. 2) Pray for the illumination of the Spirit as you