

## Treasure

Many times when we ask questions especially of God the exact or specific words we use do not actually reveal our inner thoughts and fears. There seems to be “questions behind our questions”. Until these questions behind our questions are answered we will keep searching for answers and lack peace in our hearts. When a man in the crowd asked Jesus to tell his brother to divide the inheritance with him, Jesus did not answer in the affirmative (Lk.12:13-14). Instead Jesus spoke about life not consisting of abundance of possessions. Jesus knew that the man was worried and fearful about many things and what the future would be like if he cannot lay his hands on material possessions that he had treasured in his heart. The issue behind the man’s question is his life focus and what he has placed value on as he grew up.

Jesus’ story (Lk. 12:1-21) about the rich fool spoke to the need to have a right attitude towards wealth accumulation; know that God is the one gives power to accumulate wealth; know that only God can speak authoritatively and definitely about what will happen tomorrow; know that enjoyment of any wealth we have can only be guaranteed by God. The rich fool missed this understanding because he attributed his harvest solely to his capacity and skill; saw a secured future only in terms of material things; did not consider using his resources to be a blessing unto others or to invest in God’s kingdom; saw life as being composed of physical materials, comfort, physical enjoyment or satisfaction; and did not realise that his future is in God’s hands.

We are encouraged to appreciate that God owns and controls the future and to what ends our materials will be used for and by whom. In as much as we think that writing a will can guarantee who enjoys our possessions, the situation may change after our death. Our inheritors may give the inheritance away to people we would never have wished to enjoy our wealth. We are only rich when we have value or have a store of goods with God through our faith, service and obedience. As we plan for retirement we should plan for eternal life after death if we do not want to be like the rich fool. We are encouraged to check the basis of our financial planning – is it asset accumulation; security and/or to be a blessing?

Jesus speech (Lk. 12:22-34) indicates that greed, covetousness and dependence on material things for security is a reflection of a state of worry. Jesus taught that life is more than physical items and issues and because we have value with God, He will never forsake or fail to take care of us. Our identity should not be determined by what we possess or not possess. We should not yield to impulsive buying and consumerism that teaches that we can have all that we want now and there is no need to restrain ourselves. We must give thought to what we do with the resources God has given to us and to building and maintaining a relationship with God.

Jesus was not teaching us to be careless or not to engage in planning. Jesus was teaching about the need to have faith in God's capacity to take care of us. Having faith connotes hearing God's promises and direction, planning and acting in the light of what God has spoken to us. Jesus made it clear that we are not fully capable to provide or take care of all our needs – so we need God to stand in the gap as God does for the ravens, lilies and grass. Jesus taught that worry does not result in any improvement in our situation. Worry leads to fear and even paralysis to the point that we cannot think positive or take any action. The only effective weapon against worry is faith.

God knows our needs and He is able to provide them. But we need to have the right perspective and attitude that the spiritual is more important than the physical. An item is classified as a treasure depending on the value placed on it by the person who considers it a treasure. When you treasure anything, your heart will be drawn to it that is you focus on what you treasure. What you spend your time, money and energy on indicates what you truly treasure and not what you just say you treasure. Jesus encouraged us to seek the kingdom of God and we can be assured that all our physical needs will be given unto us. This calls for making Christ our all in all at work and play, in our relationships and when making plans. This means we must make God central to our life and relate to everything with God as the core. Money or material things should not be seen as an end in themselves but as tools to serve God.

God will help us to overcome worry about what tomorrow holds. By His grace we will be able to seek His kingdom knowing that we are of value to Him and He is abundantly able to take care of us.