

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

Parable of the Talents and Stewardship

Ms Agnes Goh
Luke 12:13-21

SERMON SYNOPSIS

- **The Interruption.** In Luke 12:13-21, Jesus was teaching, warning and encouraging His disciples when a man suddenly interrupted Jesus with a request to help him gain some inheritance. So, Jesus seized the opportunity to address not on earthly issues like wealth and possessions, but on an important spiritual and kingdom focus – greed – which was the man's true motivation hidden behind the matter of inheritance. Greed often hides behind other concerns like fairness, security, and responsibility. Hence, we need to honestly look into our hearts with the help of the Holy Spirit and God's Word.
- **The Illusion.** Greed creates three illusions...
 - ✓ *Identity* - From the rich man's conversation with himself, it is apparent that his identity was founded in his wealth and possessions. God was not in his thoughts, words & life. He saw himself as the owner of all he had & not a steward of what God had entrusted to him.
 - ✓ *Control* - Greed created the rich fool to think & believe that he has control of his future and the timeline of his life. Yet the truth is that he cannot, just as he cannot control the sun and rain to ensure an abundant harvest. But God is the One who is in total sovereign control.
 - ✓ *Satisfaction* – The rich fool thought that if he had more wealth and possessions, he would find rest, peace, and satisfaction in life. This too, is a deception as God teaches us plainly in Ecclesiastes 5:10 that *"he who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity."*
- **The Imperative.** Jesus is teaching that we need to break the illusion that material possessions give us identity, control and satisfaction; and that the illusion that wealth and possessions can save us. Moreover, Jesus teaches us that whoever stores up wealth and possessions for themselves is *not* rich towards God. Jesus showed by His life's example of how to be rich towards God – unlike the rich fool who lost his life while holding on to his earthly possessions, Jesus gave his life for people, not possessions.
- A rich life towards God begins when we know God and put Him first (F.I.R.S.T.) in our life – **F**inances, **I**nterests, **R**elationships, **S**chedule, and **T**alents. And as disciples of Jesus, we are exhorted to reflect how are we living these five areas in our lives with reference to God and His values, commandments and teachings, and in doing so, align ourselves to Him.
- The problem we face today is not wealth and possessions. It is the illusion that these things give us identity, control, and satisfaction. Let us heed and act on the imperative from Jesus. Don't be like the rich fool. Be rich towards God, and a rich life towards God begins when we know God, and put him first in ALL areas of our lives.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RELATE

1. We are constantly exposed to stories of wealthy individuals being celebrated on social media, motivational speakers promising the secrets to success, and people pursuing quick riches through courses, investments, or other opportunities, sometimes becoming victims of scams. What are your thoughts on how society defines wealth and success?

REFLECT

2. The parable of the rich fool teaches us to not to hoard wealth and possessions for ourselves. Share with your CG what God teaches us about treasures on earth from the following Scripture passages.

[Verses to help us go deeper; Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19]

RESPOND

3. A rich life towards God begins when we know God and put Him first (F.I.R.S.T.) in our life. Share with your CG which one of the following five areas in your life – **F**inances, **I**nterests, **R**elationships, **S**chedule, and **T**alents – that you have chosen to work on to be aligned to God, His values, commandments and teachings. Share your experience and progress in your next CG meeting.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask the Lord for forgiveness as we, His people in TPMC, have been building up our earthly treasures out of personal greed and insecurity, and that we have not trusted Him to provide.
- Thank God for His provision, acknowledge that all we possess belongs to Him, and declare anew that we are stewards over what He entrusts to us and that we are not owners.
- Ask the Lord to change our perspective from accumulating earthly treasure to doing good with the resources He has entrusted to us, believing that in doing so, we are storing heavenly treasures.

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. [Luke 12:21 NASB1995]