

No More For Greediness

What if You Hear The Time is Over

“Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then He said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” And He told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself. ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’” ‘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 anyone who stores up things to himself but is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:13-21)

Here we are in the big examination hall where large numbers of students are undergoing the final exam which is mandatory for their graduation. Almost all of them studied hard and spent precious time in the preparation for that exam. In the examination hall you will as well find teachers standing and watching over the students, monitoring and observing. They are there to clarify some questions and to instruct them how they should answer. The students vary in how they prepared and which materials they concentrated on to review. How they understand the objectives and questions also vary. But there is one thing that they have in common, ‘students compete with themselves and with the time.’

The question that is given to us all and in broad line is this: **What is the purpose of life?**

Today in the midst of the crowd, Jesus, the wise and good teacher is standing. He is monitoring the people how they answer the above question. Being a compassionate teacher, He instructs them the steps and ways for success. But then from someone behind he is interrupted by this request: *‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’* The man is asking Jesus to intervene in a family dispute over sharing an estate. Who is this man?

1) The man does not know Jesus: *(Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?)* He misunderstood Jesus’ identity. Jesus is not a judge, a lawyer or an arbiter between men. Jesus is not a King Solomon who judges between the people by his wisdom. He is not just a teacher of the law, and He is not a mere ‘rabbi’ that speaks and judges people on material disputes. Jesus’ mission is not to teach people how to divide perishable things!

2) The man is in competition with his brother: Men are covetous to material possessions. Both the man and his brother are running to possess material things. But, not every inheritance is worth running for. In addition, the man’s request is full of greed and carries out the wish of one party against the another.

3) The man is after a false inheritance: ‘If you don’t understand the question how can you give the proper answer?’ Jesus knew that the man does not understand the real purpose of life. He wants to stores up things for himself. Jesus, when He said I am not a judge or arbiter, He wants to say that he came to open the eyes of people from the blindness of worldly inheritance to the shiny way of living in the everlasting heavenly kingdom.

4) The man’s virtual defect is the bondage of greed: Throughout the Gospel we find no clear and definite process to divide material things. And some people may say, ‘how then can we regulate our daily life matter?’ Jesus did not give the details to that man about such! If the competition between people about material things is moved from the bottom and floats on the surface, the dynamo will be the bondage of greed. Deep in our souls that ‘leech’ lies down silently and that is why the Lord warns us to **‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed.’** Any mathematical details and formulas becomes the food in the mouth of that leech (i.e. the greed), which is not only present inside that man but almost in all people. But Jesus wants to give the radical solution. What Jesus saw in that man is the same as what he is seeing in other people’s life around. And, He gave the above parable that underlines the stages of greed development:

a) Initial produce: (The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop) this is the beginning and the normal stage of life. Every one of us has a good crop, whether material possession, knowledge, certificates, position, relation, etc., that should be appropriately dealt with.

b) Serving the leech: To what we have, we want to add more, ‘like the leech who is never satisfied.’ *“The leech has two daughters. ‘Give! Give!’ they cry.” (Proverbs 30:15a)* More money, more education, more women, more friends, until the time we say, “I have no place to store my crops.” We are working hard to satisfy greediness and lust by collecting many extra things that we are not in need of and we are not going to use after.

c) Slave to the leech: When you reach your goal with certain assets and you have no more places for it you will say to yourself, **“I will tear down my barns and build bigger one, and then I will store my grain and my goods.”** This is the stage where the greed becomes really a burden. It forces you to build your own walls, towers and stores on earth with selfishness and pride.

d) False security: In this final stage the plenty material that we have and the great effort that we have lost to collect it will make us say to ourselves, **“You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”** This wealth may serve you on earth but this is not the currency use in heaven. And the time you feel that you are very rich the fact is, ‘your pockets are empty, and your walls and towers are straw.’ Do you think your wealth can keep the angel of death away from your door? What is your benefit with your possessions? Can you take it with you to the grave? Who will reward you for what you prepared for yourself? **“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul.” (Mark 8:36)**

My Dear and Beloved: What is your feeling if the master tells you that your time is over? Or if you hear the bell which means that the time for exam is over? And tell me what would be your feeling if you know that your answer to the question is wrong: “What is your purpose in life?” You toiled a lot but worthless! Are you ready now to give your paper for correction? That is a big challenge, but don’t worry, still there is a time if you start now. In whatever stage you are, go back to the beginning and to the normal stage, then find out how you can be rich toward God. Now, you can choose the right inheritance as you are reminded once more that, **“A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possession.”** And remember; don’t miss to listen to Jesus’ instructions. Amen!

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit my life into your hand, that I will not run for gaining only material things in this life, but I will seek you and walk in your ways, knowing clearly that my real security is not in the material things that I have but in you my Lord. Cleanse me Lord from all greed and lust, and purify me to be a noble vessel in your service. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*