

UNDERWAY TO THE FUTURE

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, May 21, 2006



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

[yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.](#)

“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

Luke 16: 1-13: Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and [charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property](#). So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ Then the manager said to himself, ‘[What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me?](#) I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘[How much do you owe my master?](#)’ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘[Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.](#)’ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘[Take your bill and make it eighty.](#)’ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. [And I tell you, make friends for](#)

friends! Both the Master in the story and Jesus seem positively impressed with this man. A closer look shows that Jesus was praising his **ingenuity and initiative**. He took hold of his life and got himself out of a tight situation! Apparently, he even made new friends for his ex-boss! Clearly, Jesus told this story to **point out that people are far more important than possessions**. Here is another story about a man who used someone's crookedness to get himself out of a fix. A man was riding in a taxi when he realized he had left his wallet at home. He quickly made a plan. About a block away from his destination, he said to the driver, **"Stop at this hardware store and wait for me. I need to buy a flashlight so I can look for the hundred dollar bill that I dropped back here."** When the man came out of the hardware store, the taxi was gone."

There is a fantastic little book written about Jonathan Livingston Seagull. In the opening paragraphs of this delightful fantasy, Jonathan is a loner, developing absurd flying skills. **"Why, Jon, why?"** his mother asked. **"Why is it so hard to be like the rest of the flock? Why don't you eat? Son, you're only bone and feathers!"**

"I don't mind being bone and feathers, Mom," said Jonathan. **"I just want to know what I can do in the air and what I can't, that's all. I just want to know."**

Many of us know what the little seagull was talking about. We just have to know what it would be like to spread our wings and fly in ways we have never flown before. **We are the products of our dreams**. We all have our dreams-- dreams of power, success, fame, romance, adventure.

Psychologists say that many people are the **product of their environment** while many, many others are the **products of their dreams**. **We are living in a materialistic culture, largely built on what people gather for themselves**. While important to have enough possessions to live independently in our times, some people get their priorities mixed up. When money becomes more important than the people around us do, **then we are heading for real trouble, says Jesus**. **Many young people cannot imagine life without wealth!**

Listen to the modern yuppie's prayer:

"Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray all my stuff to keep.
I pray my stocks are on the rise, and that my analyst is wise,
and all the wine I sip is white and that my hot tub's watertight,
that racquetball won't get too tough,
that all my sushi's fresh enough.
I pray my cell phone still works,
that my career won't lose its perks,
my microwave won't radiate, my condo won't depreciate.
I pray my health club doesn't close & my money market grows.
If I go broke before I wake, I pray my Volvo they won't take."

Well, he sounds a little like most of us! It is not always bad. The idea that **success** spoils people by making them vain, egotistic and self complacent is often wrong; on the contrary it makes many of them **humble, tolerant, and kind**. Failure often makes people bitter and cruel." Poverty breaks up homes; it produces disease and moral decay. It breeds crime and destroys initiative. **Poverty is no friend of God's**. There is no virtue in thinking small.

Dream dreams great enough to challenge the best in you --dreams great enough to keep you going when times get tough. When you are motivated by a great dream, you do just that – you keep reaching out. **Don't be afraid to think big!**

When you do succeed, keep it all in perspective! Aristotle Onassis was a tragic example of the importance of this principle. He had everything money could buy including being married to one of the world's most glamorous women. "All that really counts these days is money," he proclaimed. "It's the people with money who are the royalty now." He built his life on that one foundation. However, Onassis' life changed dramatically when his son Alexander died in a plane crash. 'He aged overnight,' observed a close associate. 'He suddenly became an old man.' In business negotiations, he was uncharacteristically absent-minded, irrational, and grumpy. Aristotle Onassis was never the same afterward. His little world that he thought was so safe, so secure ~ began slowly to unravel. Onassis did not die a happy man.

For you see, ultimately people are far more important than possessions. I know people who would gladly sacrifice every penny they have if they could only get their child healthy again. You will be surprised how many things in your life and mine are far, far more important than earthly possessions. Our lives only begin to make real sense when we get our priorities straight and live accordingly. People, loved ones, friends ~ are far more important than possessions.

Be a great giver! Maxey Jarman, the founder of the billion-dollar corporation, Genesco, apparently understood the message of Jesus. Even when his company was no longer doing well, he continued to contribute generously to Christian ministries. Fred Smith, Jarman's friend and colleague over four decades, asked him, during those dark days, if he ever thought of the millions, he had given away. "Of course I have," Jarman replied, but remember I didn't lose a penny I gave away. I only lost what I kept."

Think big! Dream great dreams! Fly high - but keep it all in perspective. People are far more important than possessions.

Success is only real success when your priorities are in harmony with what really matters in life. It's not me saying so - Jesus did!

Right here, right now - in the beauty of the Sanctuary and Worship we learn to understand what really matters most in life! Jesus simply put it this way,

**"But strive first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well."**

AMEN