



Finding Treasure

Read: Luke 15:11-32

The narrative of the Prodigal Son is about a young man who demands his inheritance, leaves home, squanders his resources, disgraces himself, has a change of heart and returns home to be forgiven by his father. It is a rather touching story. But if you think about it, the catalyst for this episode is the son's desire for money.

Money has a way of possessing our hearts and driving our priorities. Jesus tells us, "where your treasure is, there your heart is also" (Matthew 6:21). The young man in the gospel was driven by his desire for money and the lifestyle that he could obtain because of it. But money can't buy us happiness. Ecclesiastes 5:10 warns, "whoever loves money is never satisfied". Our true happiness lies not in wealth but in storing up "treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20).

The odd thing about any misplaced desire is that the best way to overcome it is to manage it wisely. This is especially true for money. If our perception of money and desire for material gain is disproportionate to our actual needs, it can become "the root cause of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). In order to overcome the lure of riches there are several things we can do.

First, we must recognize that wealth is a gift from God (Deuteronomy 8:18). Second, we must keep our lives free from the love of money, and be content with what we have (Hebrews 13:5). So often we crave more. We live in a "throw away culture" as Pope Francis says. Do we really need everything that we own or want? Third, we must honour the Lord with our wealth and give him the first fruits of our earnings (Proverbs 3:9). In other words, we must make it a priority to set aside money that will be given as a Sunday offering to the Lord. Giving to the Church is not solely about the upkeep of the building. Our offering is primarily about growing spiritually. It is about freeing our heart from the love of money. The more we give, the more generous we become, and the more control we have over our financial and material ambitions.

Generosity removes the influence money has over us. When we give away our wealth, we create space for God to fill us with his blessings (Malachi 3:10). By doing so we will store up true treasure in heaven.