

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 25th September 2016

TRUST

As we Gather

In His teachings, Jesus often pointed out the right and wrong use of wealth. The Pharisees considered wealth to be proof of a person's righteousness. In spite of their professed trust in God and strict religious practices they cultivated values that were godless – they measured life by wealth and possessions.

Many Christians today make the same mistake – with their lips they pay honour to the Lord, but with their wealth they live like the world.

Reading Scripture Jeremiah 32:1-3a + 6-15 Psalm 91:1-6 + 14-16 1Timothy 6:6-19
Luke 16:19-31

Thinking Together

Throughout the ages false teachers have thought that godliness is a way to financial gain; they have used their religious professions to make money. Jesus' teaching in Luke 16:19-31 startled His listeners as it contradicted the norms of the time

That do you know about, and think of, the so-called prosperity cult / teachings and the so-called evangelical road-shows of today? Discuss (1Timothy 6:9-11a)

Discuss the following statement – "When your life is controlled by the love of money you open the door to every kind of sin" (Amos 3:6-8 + 5:10-12 + 8:4-6)

Jesus' story of the rich man and the beggar highlighted a number of contrasts

- A contrast in life – flamboyant self-indulgence with sickness and poverty (Luke 16:19-21)

What evidence of selfishness and hard-heartedness can you identify? Discuss (Luke 16:19-31)

Why is one person wealthy and another poor? Discuss (Exodus 23:10-11 Leviticus 25 Deuteronomy 14:28-29 Isaiah 10:1-3 Habakkuk 2:9-13)

- A contrast in death – an absence of God with a presence of God (Luke 16:22)

What kind of funeral do you think was given to the rich man? to the beggar? Discuss

Physical death comes to us all (James 2:26)

What is the difference between the death of a Christian and that of an unbeliever? Discuss (2 Corinthians 5:1-8 Philippians 1:21)

- A contrast in eternity – the suffering of torment with the enjoyment of comfort (Luke 16:23-31)

The rich man did not go to hell because of his wealth. He had determined his own destiny by leaving God out of his life. He trusted in his riches and did not trust the Lord.

We need not fear life, because God is the ruler of all; and we need not fear death because He shares immortality with us. Only one thing can separate us permanently from God, to hear the Word of God and to fail to respond to it by faith / with trust

In our lifetime God speaks to us in many ways. How does He speak to you? Discuss

Trust is not easy. It takes courage to trust God in the face of the world's attitude to wealth.

Jeremiah demonstrated his trust in God by buying a plot of land lying in enemy hands outside the walls of the besieged city (Jeremiah 31:1-31 + 6-15).

In order to be able to trust God to carry us through all dangers and fears we need to dwell in Him, that is we need to entrust our lives to Him daily for all our needs and joys (Psalm 91:1-6 + 14-16).

Paul, in his letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:6-19), warned that for spiritual growth and personal fulfilment we should centre our desires on God, and be content to trust what He is doing in our lives. In 1 Timothy 6:17-19, he charges all those who live in comfort to

- Be humble (Deuteronomy 8:18)
- Be good stewards (Matthew 6:19-34)
- Trust God, not wealth
- Enjoy what God gives
- Employ what God gives

Discuss the application of Wesley's credo "to earn as much as you can, save as much as you can, and give as much as you can" in your life, and in your local church?

In Closing

Christians find wealth in their relationship with God, made possible through Jesus Christ; and the love, friendship, and fellowship of people. They know that the secret of happiness and contentment lies in relationships, not in things.

When Christians die, the only thing we can take with us is the trusting conviction that we go to the One who is the Friend and Lover of us all.

PRAYER

Holy God, from whom all good things come,
unchain us from our desire for wealth so that we may release
others from the prisons of poverty, hunger and oppression. Amen