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Based on Luke 12:32-40 (from the Common Lectionary)

If you are like me, you wander around yard sales, The New Beginnings Thrift Store, or antique shops trying to estimate the value of things that you own, based on the price others are selling the same items.

Unfortunately, most of the time the resale value is a lot less than what we have hoped and you realize that the true value of your treasure is only what another person is willing to pay for it.

In verse 33 of today's reading from Luke, we are called to "sell our possessions". Are we are being told to literally sell everything we own and live with nothing? I am sure that God does not want us to sell every pair of shoes we own and go barefoot, especially in the winter! Although I bet Fred would be happy if I sold the cat and half of my clothes (he does the laundry)!

I believe that God is telling us to stop living our lives to get more "stuff" that generally ends up in the attic or a storage unit. Have you noticed how many are around here? We should stop living to "keep

up with the Joneses” ... for example, acquiring an expensive car, or a mansion in the “right” neighborhood, or to have a home that looks like one on a TV serial. That doesn’t mean it is wrong if we have those things, but our focus should be on living the life God has called us to live, rather than focusing on living to expand our collection of belongings and our bank accounts. We are being called to live in service to God; to see Him as our master rather than money or possessions. To Quote James McDonald from his radio series, Walking in the Word, “Be the master of your money; don’t let it be the mast of you.”

It is often said that “Money is the root of all evil”. But the truth is that it is the love of money, over the love of God, which is the root of all evil. Money is simply a physical item that in itself has no power... simply a piece of paper. But what we do with that piece of paper is what is crucial to our Christian lives and our salvation. Money can be used to buy us treasures here on this earth, but it will not buy us treasures in Heaven.

Earthly treasures are easily stolen or lost. Close your eyes for a moment and remember how you felt when an item that you valued

was lost or stolen. Think of the feeling in your chest and the thoughts that went through your mind at that moment? Did you have malicious thoughts of possibly hurting someone who stole your prized possession? Did you have negative thoughts about yourself for losing something that was so important to you? When your love for possessions is greater than your love of God, those are the evil thoughts that will cloud your mind and your heart.

The reading goes on to say that “For Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”. For those who value the things of this earth, their heart is not with God. Their focus is not on fully living the life that God has given, thus denying themselves the treasures that wait in Heaven once their earthly lives are complete. When someone is always so busy trying to get ahead in this life, they are not giving time to forming an active relationship with God. Although they may be sitting in a church pew on Sunday, their mind is elsewhere, focused on all the other things they need to do “out in the real world” once church lets out.

This does not mean that we should become inactive or lazy. In Second Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 11, the apostle Paul notes that those who waste their time in idleness or in a non-productive manner are

easily led into sin, stating: “We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies”. Rather it means that when we are living for Christ, and are joined in fellowship to worship God, we open ourselves to receiving the Holy Spirit and building a relationship with God that will strengthen us and help us survive living “out in the real world.”

Paul and his fellow missionaries set an example of diligence for the church. He continues in Second Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 7 and 8: “You yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you. . . . On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you”.

In fact, the verses from Luke are filled with action commands: give alms, make purses ... or in modern day speak, open safe deposit accounts..., be dressed for action, open the door, be alert! God wants us to live... and He put us on this earth so that we could experience all of the wonders of this world. He created in us brains to learn and hands to work, so that we could fully experience everything that happens. We may not understand some of those things or enjoy all

those things, but they are important facets of our relationship with God. Maybe this is to help us appreciate the everlasting life that He offers to us if we simply trust in Him. Think about that... Eternal Salvation... the one thing that money can never buy!

In my own life, I always allowed myself to believe that my job title defined who I was in this world. So imagine the frustrations that arose when I didn't get a promotion that I felt I deserved or when someone else with less experience and education was in a position superior to mine. It was only when I had the epiphany that God provides the only definition of who I am that my attitude toward work was changed. The job, and mostly the paycheck, allow me to do the things that define who I am, such as serving in the church, giving to charities, caring for family and friends, and supporting those in need who God brings into my life. A heavy emotional burden has been lifted and I am now able to see the true purpose of my life.

As individuals, we are each given a different calling in life. We may never fully understand or clearly see the direction God is telling us to go. Many times, we will ask "Why?" or "How?" But He is quietly whispering in our ears, holding our hands, guiding our feet and will take us where we need to be if we follow His directions. He is telling us to

live this life focusing on His guidance and not the demands of the earthly world, which is only our temporary home.

The verses end with “You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour”. Is your focus on living your life in a manner which is preparing you for the coming of Christ and the fulfillment of the promise of eternal life? “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”.

Amen

## Psalm 33:12-22 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<sup>12</sup> Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD,  
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage.

<sup>13</sup> The LORD looks down from heaven;  
he sees all humankind.

<sup>14</sup> From where he sits enthroned he watches  
all the inhabitants of the earth—

<sup>15</sup> he who fashions the hearts of them all,  
and observes all their deeds.

<sup>16</sup> A king is not saved by his great army;  
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

<sup>17</sup> The war horse is a vain hope for victory,  
and by its great might it cannot save.

<sup>18</sup> Truly the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him,  
on those who hope in his steadfast love,

<sup>19</sup> to deliver their soul from death,  
and to keep them alive in famine.

<sup>20</sup> Our soul waits for the LORD;  
he is our help and shield.

<sup>21</sup> Our heart is glad in him,  
because we trust in his holy name.

<sup>22</sup> Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,  
even as we hope in you.

### New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

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Idleness is not the same as rest. The Bible advises people to rest, and taking breaks from work is good. By “idle” we mean “lazy” or “doing nothing when you should be doing something.” Idleness often stems from not having a specific goal or purpose in mind. With no goal, one can be easily distracted. The book of Proverbs warns us that sloppy or careless work is akin to malicious destruction: “One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys” ([Proverbs 18:9](#)).

We live in a sinful world, and a person who doesn't have something particular to do will invariably be tempted to do something sinful. If we have nothing to do, the devil is all too eager to find things to

occupy our time.

Paul and his fellow missionaries set an example of diligence for the church. “You yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you. . . . On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you” ([2 Thessalonians 3:7-8](#)). Idleness was not a part of Paul’s lifestyle, and we can’t afford to countenance it in our lives, either.

Yes, “idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” The Lord knew that He needed to be about His Father’s business ([Luke 2:49](#)), and so should we. Jesus told us to pray for “workers” to be sent into the harvest field, not idlers ([Luke 10:2](#)). There is work to be done for the Kingdom, and we must not be distracted by the things of the world.

<http://www.gotquestions.org/idle-hands-devils-workshop.html>