

Do You Want to Be Happy?

‘What a silly question! Of course I do. Everybody wants to be happy, don’t they? I certainly do’. So... what would make you really happy? Many – even if they don’t say it out loud – think that if they had lots of money, they would be really happy. That is what they think. Perhaps you do. ‘If I had plenty of money – enough to buy whatever I want, I would be really happy’. You think so? ‘If I had enough money to have a secure old age, to be able to pay for all my health care, to give me a good pension when I retire, I would be really content’. You think so? ‘If I had so much money that I wouldn’t know what to do with it, I would be really happy’. You think so? ‘No more worries, no more cares, no more problems. If only I had enough money’. You think so?

Many people do think like that. Many enter the lottery every week in hope of winning millions of euros. That’s their dream – they hope their number will come up, and they will win more euros than they can count. If that should happen – why, then they would be truly happy. They would be able to say goodbye to all their miseries and worries, and, as in the child’s fairy tale, live happily ever after. So they think. Some – a very few – do win such sums, and walk away with such money. Many millions don’t, but a few do. Nevertheless, so desperate are they to get their hands on such money, the millions go on buying tickets in the forlorn hope of winning – and in the even more forlorn hope that, if they do win, this will make them happy. Do you think like that? Do you think money would make you happy? Do you think if you could get your hands on pots of money this would be the end of all your problems?

Then let me tell you the truth. You may not like it, but it is the truth. You think money would make you happy? It

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wouldn't. Piles of money will never make you truly happy. Let me say it again. Money and possessions will never really satisfy. I am telling you the truth, I assure you. Will you listen to it? Let me say at once that it is not I who is saying it. It is the Lord Jesus Christ – he who is the truth (John 14:6), he who always tells the truth – it is he who says it. And he says it to you, now. Listen to what he has to say about money and happiness:

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 down 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 for himself, but is not rich towards God (Luke 12:16-21).

Here we have the truth about money, possessions and happiness. The truth, I say!

Think about it for a moment. Jesus tells us about a man who talks just like you. If only I could be rich enough, he says, I would be truly happy. That is his aim in life. If I have enough money to give me a good time, I will be really content. So he thinks. The more I can get, the more I can keep, the more happy I shall be. That is what makes him tick. And there are many just like him.

But what does the Lord Jesus say about this man? Pay particular attention to his words. He says: 'But God...'. Note the 'but'. There is always a 'but'. Note it well! There is a 'but' in this money/happiness business. There is something that all the money in the world cannot sort out and deal with. And that 'but' ruins all the hopes men have – if they build those hopes on money and possessions. But most people don't want to think about the 'but'. But... the

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‘but’ is there, all the same. You must allow for the ‘but’. Do you allow for the ‘but’?

‘But’. Have you ever thought about the ‘but’? Let me remind you of what we are talking about: ‘But God said to him...’ The man was thinking about his money and his barns and his ease. But he forgot God. He forgot what God has to say about it all. ‘But God said to him...’

Now, what did God say to him? What was it the man forgot? He was thinking about his money and his happiness, but he forgot that God has the right and the power – at any time he chooses – to call every man to account before him. In short, the man forgot that he had to die, that he might die at any moment, and that after death he would have to appear before God and account for his life. He forgot God! He left God out of his reckoning. He forgot he had to die! What a bad mistake! What a foolish man! He forgot that having all the money in the world could not stave off the inevitable – death! And he forgot what would happen after he died: ‘It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement’ (Hebrews 9:27). No amount of money can prevent that!

Death! Men don’t like to think or talk about it, do they? I dare say you don’t! But it is the one inevitable certainty for us all – from the moment we are born. It does not matter how rich or how poor we are – we all have to die and give an account before God. No amount of money can prevent it.

God called the man a ‘fool’ because he forgot this basic fact of life. God called him a fool because all the man could think about was his money and his happiness in this life. He forgot that he would have to die, and then face God on his judgement throne. *He forgot eternity*. Where would he spend *that*?

And our appointment with death and judgement may come sooner than we like to think. ‘This very night’, said God, to the man. Now who can tell when God will say it to

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me? Who can tell when God will say it to *you*? One day, soon, it *will* be said to me. One day, soon, it *will* be said to *you*. And then the judgement. *Your* judgement. No amount of money can stop it. And no amount of money will prevent that day of judgement before a holy God.

So what will make you truly happy? True happiness is to know that, whenever the dread summons comes – ‘this very night your life will be required of you’ – you will be ready for it, ready to meet God. Now *that* requires riches which this world can never provide. It is not the riches of money. As Jesus said, you must be ‘rich towards God’. And what is that? How can a man or a woman ‘be rich towards God’? That is the real question. How can *I* be rich towards God? How can *you* be rich towards God?

God has not left us in the dark about it. He has told us, and told us very plainly. Will you listen to him? Let me return to the Hebrews passage. ‘It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement’, yes. But how does the Scripture go on? Like this: ‘Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time... to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him’ (Hebrews 9:27-28). The Lord Jesus Christ is the way to be rich towards God. Paul the apostle could remind believers: ‘You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich’ (2 Corinthians 8:9). Now *that* is true riches.

The fool was preoccupied with making money and being happy in this life. That is what he thought about; that is what he lived for. Are you like that? Then remember this: God will soon be calling you to account for your life. If you want to be happy for ever, you ought to be preparing for that day. You ought to be thinking about being rich towards God. And that means being right with him, saved from your sin. And the only way to be rich towards God – rich so that you can appear before him with no fear of

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condemnation – is by turning from your sin, and trusting Christ. And doing so at once. You dare not presume that you can wait to sort this matter out. Time may not be on your side. Remember, God said ‘this very night’ to the man. But, if you rely upon Christ’s blood shed on the cross as the effectual sacrifice to wash you from your sin, you will be ready to meet God – whenever the summons may come. If you rest your soul on Christ by faith, you will be right with God, and have peace with him through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). If you trust Christ alone for your salvation, you will be truly rich – you will never be condemned (Romans 8:1). You will not perish, but you will have everlasting life (John 3:16). Now *that* is what it means to be truly rich and really happy. If the Lord Jesus Christ is your Lord and Saviour, then you will be happy for ever. Money can never make you truly happy. Christ – and only Christ – can.

Do you want to be happy? Really happy? For this life and for ever? Then trust Christ! Ask him to wash you from your sins. And do it NOW! If you do, you will be rich towards God, and truly happy for evermore. Whatever happens to you in this life, whenever the time comes for you to die, whenever God calls you to face him on his judgement throne – nothing can, and nothing will, ever take away your happiness.

But without Christ, whatever you may have, whatever wealth you may possess, nothing will ever make you truly happy. ‘What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?’ (Mark 8:36). If you go down that route, you will be miserable for ever. Please, I plead with you, do not delay. Turn to Christ, ask for his forgiveness for your sin, and do it now. And then you will be happy for ever.