

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our [Lord Jesus Christ!](#)

What are you supposed to do in life? Well, according to the world, the idea seems to be to succeed, to be a success in life. So how do you succeed? How do you measure success?

Well, again according to the world, the primary measurement seems to be one of "more." The more money you have, the more stuff you have, the more clout you have, the more whatever you have, the more you are judged to be successful, to be a success, to be a winner.

But Jesus ups the ante this week. I remember Bishop Aitken sharing a couple stories that I think relate very well to this gospel reading. He told two stories, one of the [rich man](#) who upon his death bed swallowed the only key to the safe where he kept literally millions in cash. No one was going to have what he had accumulated. I suppose he died thinking he was a success, a winner.

The second story was about the young couple who bought land on [Rainy Lake](#) and wanted Pastor Aitken, still in International Falls, to bless it. But not on [Friday night](#). Because that was the night where they visited with residents of a nursing home in North Minneapolis, and had done so [every Friday night](#) but one since their marriage ten years previous

Last week Jesus warned us to be on our guard against greed, and Bishop Aitken's stories concerned that particular battle, the young couple, giving their time every Friday night for ten years, winning the battle. Well now here Jesus not only tells us to quit wanting to accumulate, but also to settle for a lot less. Sell what you have and give it to the poor, Jesus says. He reminds us that God provides for our every need. Jesus tells us we should make purses that don't wear out, that we should not be so attached to our stuff that we couldn't sell it all and give alms to the needy. Because treasure in heaven, our faith, hope, love, charity, righteousness, walking in God's way, these things are far more important than any amount of money, land, or stuff.

Crazy. Just crazy. But that is Jesus, at least in the eyes of the world. That is how we, his followers, are also meant to be. Then Jesus says "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. So let me ask you a question. What kind of [Christian](#) do you want to be? What kind of person do you want to be? Well, let me ask you another question. Where is your treasure right now? Is it where you want your heart to be? If your heart is in the wrong place, with the wrong kind of treasure, you will be like that rich fool from our gospel parable last Sunday, lots of stuff, but not rich toward God. But for those whose hearts are in the right place centered on Christ, this world is not home. And generosity, giving freely of all God has given them, happens because they know that it is the Father's good pleasure to give them the whole kingdom.

Those who know this, whose hearts are in heaven, are eager, and alert, lamps lit,

ready to open the door the minute the Master knocks. That's what this has to do Jesus' illustration about the waiting slaves. Our home is not here on earth. It may feel like it, we can get pretty comfortable here in this world of God's.

Jesus talks about wealth and his second coming in the same sentences, because those who are fixed on the world and things, or lack of things, will not be ready when the Master comes unexpectedly. Nor will they be ready who are impatient and just want to get on with their lives, living as if they have no interest that Christ may show up this morning an hour after our service. And then what does job, retirement, land or house matter? Attachment to treasure stored in worn-out purses, to trials and busyness of this world means not being ready when the Master comes home.

Sell your possessions, give alms, Jesus says. In other words, give to the needy. Giving is good. It is good for those who receive, and it is even better for those who give. When you give you open your hands, when you open your hands, you open your heart. When you give of your possessions, your time, your talents, when you give your life as a [disciples of Christ](#), you are suddenly open to receive even more than you give. You receive [abundant life](#), not a life of abundance, but a life that is fulfilled, not just filled. You receive of the joy that is felt by our Lord, the [Son of Man](#). With open hands and hearts, our treasure is indeed the Lord himself, and we are immeasurably blessed!

Sound crazy? Maybe. But true, oh so true!

Amen