

## TOTAL REVOLUTION in OUR WORLD

### Session #3: The Parable of The Barns (Luke 12:13-21)

**Session Objective:** The objective of this session is to impress upon students that life can only be lived well when we remember that this life is not all that there is to reality. Jesus paints a picture of a race where the finish line is painted one step beyond the grave. The man in the parable thought he was winning the race only to discover that he never even knew the rules! He thought that 'whoever dies with the most toys wins'; he didn't realise that the Kingdom of God is all about living for others in this life because we will live with Jesus in the next. This session will try and get students to ask:

- What do I trust in?
- How will my life be judged?
- What is the basic guiding principal of Kingdom Life?
- Is what I'm doing now "Kingdom Business"?

**Minimum Prep:** Read through the entire session outline and the parable. Prepare an environment where discussion can occur.

**Extended Prep:** If you have some extended prep time, consider a dramatic reading or a straight skit with a narrator and several actors. If you videotape it you can edit and add sound effects!! Another idea would be to use a video clip for 'cultural tie in'.

- One clip that might work would be from "**Titanic**". This is a two-part clip and will require advance prep to mark out the start and stop points on your VCR counter. The first part of the clip is when all the rich people are boarding. One well dressed gentleman observing the ship for the first time remarks: "Look at her! She's fantastic! God himself could not sink her!" You could use this ominous statement to begin discussing what people trust in. The man in the parable trusted riches, the man in Titanic trusted technology. Fast forward to about 1hr and 4 minutes into tape two as the lifeboat approaches the floating bodies. Run for 1.5 minutes. You could then discuss how life is uncertain, death comes to all and it is important to trust in God and use each day. You could also talk about how part of our job is to rescue people who are drowning. The movie imagery would be useful.
- Another possible video clip could be from "**Patch Adams**". This movie tells the story of a young doctor who believes that caring for people is more important than building up an impressive career. Time and again he

offends his bosses and takes on poor patients because he wants to help other people feel better. There is a great clip at approximately 38 minutes in where Patch explains his philosophy to a colleague and enlists her help in treating a patient according to his unorthodox style. The clip lasts about 4 minutes. The clip could be used to discuss the real point of life (to be rich towards God and others) as taught by the parable.

- A third possible clip would be from the movie “**Bruce Almighty**”. When Bruce finally meets God his life is measured and found wanting. Even though he had worked hard to become a great reporter he had put aside very little time for helping others. Bruce is then given Divine Power for a week and is evaluated by God half way through. So far, Bruce has not used his powers to help anyone! He has only used his gifts to settle old scores and advance his career. You could use this clip to discuss how God evaluates our life and how we use our gifts to help others.

## Session Outline

### Leader Preamble:

This week we are going to be starting with a look at a story Jesus told about the Kingdom of God. In this story Jesus tells us of a man who thought he had life all figured out! He thought he was winning the race of life, only to discover that he had never even understood the rules! He lost huge, because he broke the basic rule of Kingdom life. Do you know the rules of the race? Are you trusting in the right things? How will God evaluate your life when you cross the last stretch of the course, right through the doorway of death and stand before him? Those are big questions and this story told by Jesus will help get us going. Let read Luke 12:13-21.

### Small Group Questions:

#### 1. What did this man think was the purpose in life?

*He obviously thought the purpose in life was to accumulate lots of stuff so that you could lie around, eat, drink and be merry.*

#### 2. Jesus obviously wanted us to have a different understanding of life. Right before he told this parable he said: “A person’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions”. If life is not about gathering possessions, what do you think Jesus thought life was all about?

3. **Jesus taught that the purpose of life was to be rich towards God and others. This would be a good time to use the clip from “Bruce Almighty” as instructed in the extended prep section. Ask: What did Bruce think the purpose of life was at the start of the movie? How did he use his powers? What did God think of that? What did God teach him was the true point of life?**
4. **The man in the story trusted in his money. He thought that his many possessions would guarantee him a long and happy life. What did he forget?**
5. **He forgot that life is uncertain and destiny is in the hands of God. This would be a good time to show the first “Titanic” clip as instructed in the extended prep section. Ask: What did the man in the clip trust in? Why was that foolish?**
6. **If life is uncertain, how should we live each day?**

*We should seize every day and make the most of it. Ask the students to each name one thing they have been putting off that they should do right away.*

7. **Jesus makes it pretty clear that we will have to give an accounting to God at the end of this life and that bribes will not be accepted at the door! What are three things about your life right now that you think will be pleasing to the Lord? What is one thing you want to fix before you “cross the last line”?**
8. **The basic warning in this parable is to not miss the rules of the race. What are the rules of the race? If you could sum up what life should be all about in two sentences, what would you say?**

*If you want to prime the pump a little bit, you could throw out the great commandment: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind and love your neighbour as yourself.*

**Transition:**

**Leader Note:** The following paragraph represents a sample of how you might transition the group from the pulse of the parable to the dream of the Kingdom. You can reword it as you choose.

Jesus seems to be challenging us to look at life differently in the Kingdom of God. Life in the Kingdom is not about money or possessions! Its about being rich towards God and others. This parable is a challenge to our entire way of life! We live in a free market capitalist society where the whole point of our lives is to work hard so that we can buy ourselves more stuff. Our life is a giant game and money is how we keep score. What would change if we really believed that life is about being rich towards God and others?

### Dreams of The Kingdom:

**Leader Note:** Parts of the following discussion would work best in a circle fashion. Offer students the opportunity to answer each of these questions. They may 'pass' if they feel uncomfortable.

- 5. Was the man in the story condemned for making lots of money? Why was God upset with him? What does this mean for your life and future plans?**

*Its ok to make money, it just gives us more to be generous with! The problem with the man in the story was that he thought only of himself; he was not rich towards God or others.*

- 6. Let's go around the circle and each name one way in which our world would need to change if we were to really act on what Jesus is saying about Kingdom life.**

*If you want to prime the pump you might say: The whole way in which we enjoy the fruit of our labour would change. People would all live on a maximum of \$60 000 and give the rest away, even if they made \$1 000 000 a year! Christians would loan money to each other and not charge interest. The U.S. (supposedly a Christian country) would forgive the trillions of dollars owed to them by third world countries. Christians would give more than 1.5% of their income to charity. We would start to think "we" instead of "me".*

- 7. One of the nasty trends in our culture is that we are always conditioned to plan for the future. RRSPs, RESPs, early retirement, all night study sessions and burning the candle at both ends are all phrases that really mean: My life tomorrow is more important than my life today. When we are in High School we work hard to get into University; when we are in University we work hard to get a good job; when we are working we work hard to save money so that we can retire. When do we live today? What are some things you could do with your life NOW?**

*Students could go on a mission trip, they could take a year off between High School and University and work in a homeless shelter, they could start caring for the older people in their neighborhood or Church.*

### Comments and Feedback

**Leader Note:** This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

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Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.