



## *Life is more than . . .*

If I was to ask you what the most important thing is in your life, I wonder what you would say?

In the midst of a war, I believe we must allow ourselves to be confronted with these questions: what is it that we are really living for, and what are we willing to die for?

On a bigger scale we may ask: what is so important to our Australian government, which is acting on behalf of you and me, that they are willing to send troops into battle?

Many people think that this war with Iraq is fundamentally related to oil, to economics, to greed. Whether they are right, I don't know, but I do know that the Bible says: "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that battle within you?"<sup>1</sup> I also know that it is true that so many in Australia are preoccupied with maintaining or improving their present luxurious affluent lifestyles, which are so dependent on energy and fuel. People are so concerned with stock-market prices, their superannuation funds, and

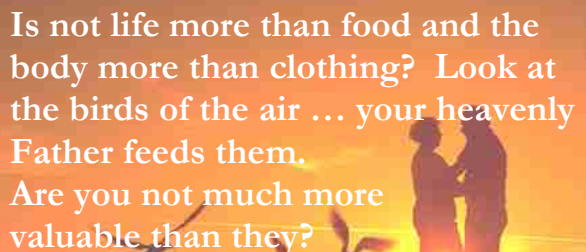
property prices, that they can all too easily forget what life is really all about - loving relationships with God and each other.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus also clearly highlighted this area of greed and living for money and affluence, which actually destroys us and leaves us "living in darkness"<sup>3</sup>.

How can we tell if greed is affecting us, and how can we be free from it?

Jesus basically gives only one diagnostic question: **where is your treasure?**

Jesus asks us to have a look at where our treasures are. Are they on earth or in heaven? In my own life, I decided that if I have an insurance policy for my own possessions, then my treasures are on earth. I decided that if I voluntarily contributed to a superannuation fund, my treasures are on earth. Jesus says: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,



Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air ... your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."<sup>4</sup>

In response to Jesus' quite simple question, someone might say that they *have* to have some treasures stored up so that they can be sure they will have food and drink on the table for themselves and their children, either tomorrow or when they get older!

However, Jesus anticipates this response by saying outright: "**Do not worry** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Trust God! Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things, and will provide them for you as you do justice and show mercy to the oppressed. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow."<sup>5</sup>

I think this statement of Jesus tells us the real problem in the world today. Many of us say with our lips that we trust God, but in practice we deny it. Our world in reality is based around this motto: "In Money we trust".

The following story radically illustrates the life Jesus wants us to live:

"A great king wanted to have a magnificent palace built for himself. So he sent a servant to look for a builder.

He was directed to a man in a far country called Thomas, whom he took back to the king. Thomas agreed to build the palace for him. As quickly as Thomas received money from the king for the building materials, he spent it on provisions for the poor. Eventually, the great king insisted on being taken to see the progress on his palace. When he discovered that there was nothing to be seen, he threw Thomas into prison, vowing to execute him.

"That night, the king's brother died. An angel met him to escort him to his new abode. As they passed through the heavenly dwellings, his eyes were drawn to a splendid palace. 'Whose is that wonderful mansion?', he asked. 'That belongs to your brother', he was told. 'How did he get such a wonderful palace?', he exclaimed. The angel replied, 'This is the palace that Thomas has been building for him.' On hearing this, he knew he must return to earth and tell his brother before Thomas was executed. As soon as the king heard his brother's story, he became a follower of Jesus and asked Thomas (whom he then released) to baptize him."<sup>6</sup>

My prayer is that we as a community will be a model to the world of a group of people who truly are living in love, who are not greedy, and who show the world that we don't need all the things the media puts before our eyes to be able to truly enjoy life to its fullest!

Do you agree? I hope so! ☺

---

(4) Matthew 6:19-21. (5) cf Matthew 6:25-34. (6) Edited from 'The Acts of Judas-Thomas' in *A History of Eastern Christianity*, Aziz S. Atiyeh, Methuen, 1968.

# AA's Twelve Steps

This month, I thought I'd include the steps which Alcoholics Anonymous use in their recovery program. They may be of help for you in some area of your life (just replace the word *alcohol* with the issue you are struggling with):

1. We admitted we were powerless over *alcohol* - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we *understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we *understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to *alcoholics* and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

# My Answer

**Q: "Dear Chaplain, if Adam & Eve only had two sons, Cain & Abel, and the Bible says that Cain had a wife, who was she?"**

**A:** The Bible clearly says that Adam & Eve had many more children besides Cain & Abel, both sons and daughters.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Cain's wife<sup>2</sup> must have been one of his sisters.

But you may ask: "Doesn't the Bible forbid brother-sister intermarriage?"

Yes, it does, but this law was only given to Moses thousands of years after Adam & Eve. The reason why we today are not permitted by law to marry close relations is because any children born have an unacceptably high risk of being deformed. This is because of accumulated mistakes in our genes which have a high probability of overlapping amongst siblings and close relatives. But Adam and Eve were physically perfect, and their children would have received virtually no imperfect genes from them. In that situation, brother & sister could have married with God's approval, without any potential to produce deformed offspring.

## ***Thought for the month***

"It's better to be honest and poor than to be dishonest and rich".

*Proverbs 16:8*

# News & Events

## \* **CELEBRATION SUNDAYS!**

We are one more step closer to having a public "Church Service" with a difference! Starting in the month of May, a once-per-month Celebration Worship Service will be held in the Preston Nth East Primary School hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month at 5pm! There will be great live music, as well as supper provided afterwards. Plan to bring your family and friends! All are welcome! Final details in my next newsletter.

\* **Sunday worship.** Currently every Sunday at 11am I meet with a few people in my home or theirs, and we sing, talk, pray, and have Holy Communion together. If you would like to join with us, you are welcome! Please ring me for more details.

\* **Questions?** If you have any questions you'd like me to address in the "My Answer" column of this newsletter, please ring me, or write to the address below.

\* **Prayer for Healing.** If you would really like some people to pray for you or others you know about problems in life, whether physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual, there are people who are willing to do just that. Please contact me about this.

\* **FREE Booklet!** If you would like a copy of my free booklet "Building a better life: a pocket-guide for Christian living", just call me! It addresses the six core aspects of human living, and gives the Bible's answers for how to live well.

**Peter Kutschker**  
**Community Chaplain, East Preston /**  
**Reservoir** (03) 8430 8574  
5/3 McLennan Place, Preston, 3072

A ministry supported by Regent Baptist Church,  
West Evangelical Christian Church, and LinC  
Northern Region