

Minister's Message – March 2005

Latifundism

Woe to you who join house to house, then add field to field. These are not the words of the Governor of the Reserve Bank, though he might well find them appropriate. These are words spoken by Isaiah the prophet around 700 B.C. (Isaiah 5:8). The Lord God warned the rich against adding house to house or accumulating houses, for one day *many houses shall be desolate*. Latifundism is word that describes this practice. Maybe we will see in the headlines soon.

Our nation is in the midst of a debt crisis. How amazing that a 0.25% rise in interest rates can bring the nation to its knees. I went to the garage to get a rego check on that Tuesday morning and found all the mechanics just sitting around. There were no cars to service. How come? I asked. Everyone is waiting to hear about interest rates the man said. They are holding off serving their car until they hear about that 0.25%. How amazing.

Why do people keep acquiring property and doing so without the money. Is it that everyone else seems to own a few houses. Is it that we read how someone has just sold a house for a huge profit? We want to be in on the action and not miss out. The Bible calls that covetousness. Remember the 10th commandment! The Bible also tells us that *godliness with contentment is great gain* (I Timothy 6:6). It seems more and more people are having trouble sleeping these days – and no wonder. Being content with what the Lord has given you, rather than coveting what others have, will ensure you sleep better.

Maybe owning a lot of property makes people feel secure. We often hear people say- I want to have enough to ensure a comfortable retirement. We must accumulate as much as we can so we can do all that we want in retirement. They dream of a long and wonderful retirement. The Bible also has a word to say about such a person.

Jesus told a short but powerful story about a man who had a great harvest. You can read for yourself in Luke 12:13-21. The season was wonderful with lots of rain and sunshine. As he harvested the crop his barns started to overflow. So what did he do? He built bigger barns of course. He thought Wow, I have so much stored up I can retire now and live it up for years to come.

But God said to him. But God said. Sounds ominous doesn't it? And indeed it was for this rich man. *God said Fool! This very night your life will be required of you.* That very night the man died. He did not stop to consider his own mortality, to consider death, as he worked hard at building bigger barns.

This is a sobering story. God words may seem harsh, but they are true aren't they? Can you be sure that you will live to enjoy a long retirement? You have probably known someone who has not. Isn't it time to stop and think, to stop and take stock, to stop and seek wisdom? *Ones life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions said Jesus* (Luke 12:15). Hard to argue against that I would think!

Jesus wants you to stop before you rush out and buy another property, or get another job to pay off your mortgage. Stop and consider your life. Jesus has an alternative retirement plan that will overcome the flaw that is in yours. Your retirement strategy does not factor in death. Jesus offers you a plan that does – if you will believe in him.

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