

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 7 Nov 2021

**Sermon Title** : Possessions

**Speaker** : Rev Peter Koh

**Text** : Ecclesiastes 5:10-15

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Many people today are concerned about accumulating possessions. We often get hung up over our possessions regardless of how much or how little we own. However, we cannot bring any possessions with us to heaven when we die. In fact, God has everything we need in heaven. Hence, we need to turn away from this in order to draw closer to God.

## **Context**

When King Solomon received the message from God in 2 Chronicles 7:14, he was blessed with much wealth and possessions. However, in his writings in Ecclesiastes, he had realised that wealth and possessions are trappings which cause man to fall short of the glory of God.

In Ecclesiastes 5:10-15, Solomon identified 2 common trappings of possessions which cause us to fall away from God:

### **A. Never Enough Syndrome (Eccl 5:10-12)**

- **Possessions cannot afford us satisfaction (v.10)**
  - No matter how much we earn, money never seems enough. The more we earn, the more we want. The more money we have, the more we spend.
  - This is sometimes known as the 'poverty spirit'. Poverty is the state/condition of lack in our lives.
  - Thus, pursuing possessions does not give us satisfaction. Instead, pursuing possessions puts us on the trail of strife and covetousness.
- **Possessions are consumed by those who are dependent on them (v.11)**
  - When we are hung up on accumulating possessions, we cannot let go. Some elderly people cling on so tightly to money that they allow money to control them. They focus on keeping their money but forget about building relationships with their loved ones. They want their children to visit them and take care of them financially but neglect building good relationships and trust with their children. Holding on to money tightly only causes more misunderstandings, more struggles in how we relate to one another.

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*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

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- Another problem is that having more money attracts 'human leeches' who hang on to you because they want a part of your money.
  - Often, struggles over money are the cause of many breakups in families. When a patriarch or matriarch of the family passes away, often, the poorer siblings pressurise the richer siblings to quickly sell their parents' property as they need the money desperately. The richer siblings prefer to wait until market sentiments improve. This results in a legal tussle amongst the siblings over their parents' assets and destroys the unity of the family.
  - We need to be careful not to allow our possessions to destroy our relationships with our loved ones.
- **Possessions can be a source of anxiety to the possessor (v.12)**
    - The more money people have, the more worried they will be that someone will steal their possessions. It makes us lose sleep, be anxious/worried or insecure. Some people with many possessions even hire security guards to guard what they have.
    - Some put their money in the bank but constantly worry about whether the bank will go bust.
    - Others invest their money in bonds or shares but constantly monitor the market to see if their investments are yielding good returns.
    - Thus, having more possessions becomes a source of stress and anxiety for people. In some cases, people are so busy safeguarding their wealth that they isolate themselves and fail to live life to the fullest.

We should not cling on so tightly to possessions. In fact, God wants us to give our possessions freely to others. Those who try to cling on tightly to their possessions are like the monkey who sees a peanut in a glass bottle with a narrow opening. The monkey's hand gets trapped because it refuses to let go of the peanut in the bottle.

## **B. Gaining the World and losing our soul (Eccle 5:13-15)**

- **Possessions may cause harm to the owner (v.13)**
  - In the earlier story about the monkey, it lost its freedom because it chose to hold on to the peanut in the bottle.
  - Worrying about our possessions can cause insomnia. It can make us do risky things like rushing into a burning house to retrieve our money. Some even prefer to risk their lives to fight an armed robber rather than lose the money to the robber.
  - Money is just a piece of paper until you spend it. Hoarding money does not help us live a richer life but can in fact cause harm.
- **Possessions are of no avail beyond this life (vv.14-15)**
  - 'Naked we are born and naked we will depart.' Eccles 5:15. We cannot carry anything into heaven.

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- Whatever we possess will rot and decompose in this physical world. We can only carry our character and our lives spent living for God to heaven.
- It is God's desire for us to love Him and to have our security in Him, not to put our security in our possessions. Our possessions are nothing to God. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He owns everything. We should see our possessions as a gift from God. It is God, the Giver of all things, who has blessed us and enriched our lives. He is the reason we can rejoice in the abundance of life.

**“I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.”** - Martin Luther

## **Results of handing our possessions to God:**

- God helps us multiply them. When we use the gifts God has given us, they grow our relationships with others and grow our personal well-being. When we give our possessions away to bless the poor and needy, the smiles on their faces also bring joy to our hearts. When we hang on tightly to our possessions, it deprives us of bringing joy to others and causes more harm than good.
- When we hold our possessions loosely and give them to God, God may take them away but He will replace them with something better. When we hold on too tightly to our possessions, it is a painful process when God pries open our fingers to get the possessions out of our hands. Possessions distract us from our relationship with God and become our idol.
- Only God gives us security. Possessions may give us stability but they do not give us security. Possessions are earthly riches but in God, we are spiritually wealthy. Only God can give us true security.

John Sung, a well-known evangelist in China in the 1930s, threw his academic awards into the sea to signify his full commitment to the Gospel after he returned from his studies overseas. He gave up his “earthly possessions” but gave of himself to God. As a result, God used John Sung powerfully not only in China but also among the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.

## **CONCLUSION**

Let us turnaround from our tendency to hang on too tightly to our possessions. Instead, let us learn to trust God with the things we have and let Him be our security. In Him, we have everything we need. May we flee from the love of money and pursue righteousness and godliness (1 Timothy 6:11) by giving of ourselves and our possessions to God and let God use us to be a blessing to those around us.

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## **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

### A. Review Sermon Content

**Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.**

Appoint someone to read Ecclesiastes 5:10-15 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, ‘This is the Word of the Lord.’

All to respond, “Thanks be to God.” Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now.”

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?
- b. As God's word was read, what is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Possessions"?
- c. How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

- 2a. How have you personally struggled with the two trappings below?
  - (i) Never enough syndrome
  - (ii) Gaining the world but losing your soul
  
- 2b. How can focusing on protecting our possessions lead to neglecting our relationship with:
  - (i) God
  - (ii) Our loved ones, family members and others?
  
- 2c. What does “possessions provide stability but only God gives security” mean to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3a. What is one material possession that you will be reluctant to part with, even if God asks for it?
  
- 3b. (i) What is the mentality that is causing you to hold that possession in 3a. back from God?
  - (ii) How can you overcome this mentality so you can be ready to use every possession for God’s glory?
  
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b. above, so that you can experience God’s security and spiritual blessings for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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## **C. Testimonies and Prayer**

***Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.***

4. Share your testimony on how God blessed you after you turned around from putting priority in accumulating and protecting your possessions to building up your relationship with God and with your loved ones.

OR

Give thanks to God for helping you to overcome the trappings of possessions to be a good steward, using what He has blessed you with to bless others.

5. With a prayer partner, take time to pray for the concerns in 3a and 3b above, asking God to give you strength and wisdom to hold on to your possessions lightly and be a good steward of all that God has blessed you with.

As a group, pray for our church that we may as individuals and a community learn to find our security in God and not in our possessions. Pray that God will help us be a generous community that shares our possessions with those in need, and in so doing transforms lives and changes the world around us..

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