

Short Talk

(SHT162)

Guard against greed!

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SHORT TALK: “Guard against greed!”

- Aim of Short talk:** To challenge people over their attitude to their possessions, encouraging them to guard against greed.
- Use of Short talk:** This is a short All Age talk picking out one issue from the Lectionary Gospel reading of the Sunday main service. The talk stands alone and assumes that the Gospel Bible reading may not yet have been read to the congregation. It could be used for example, for the whole congregation before the children go out to their age specific groups, leaving the adults with a full sermon later.
- Main themes:** Possessions, Greed, Life
- Biblical references:** Luke 12:13-21
- Lectionary:** Year C – 7th Sunday after Trinity
- Props:** You need a table at the front of church. On it lay out 3 plates of wrapped chocolate biscuit bars (e.g. KitKat etc) as follows:
1. One chocolate biscuit
 2. Five chocolate biscuits
 3. Enough chocolate biscuits for every member of your congregation to have one OR at least fifty.

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On my table I have three plates of biscuits.

- Plate 1 has one chocolate biscuit on it.
- Plate 2 has five chocolate biscuits on it and
- Plate 3 has over fifty chocolate biscuits on it. *(or whatever number of biscuits you have)*

I want you to imagine for a moment that you can choose one of these plates of biscuits to take home with you at the end of the service and keep for yourself.

- Which plate of biscuits would make you happier?
- If you don't like biscuits, imagine the plates have something on them that you do like.

Think about it and be honest with yourself because I am not going to ask you to tell me which plate you would choose.

- Which plate of biscuits would make you happier? (PAUSE)

If we are completely honest with ourselves, not many of us would be very happy to receive a plate with only one biscuit on it, would we?

- We might be happy to receive 5 biscuits, but many of us would prefer to receive 50.
- We tend to think that the more we have, the happier we will be.

Now imagine if on those plates, instead of biscuit bars, were solid gold bars.

- On plate 1, there is one solid gold bar.
- On plate 2, there are five solid gold bars and
- On plate 3, there are one thousand solid gold bars.

Which plate would make you happier? (PAUSE)

Again, if we are completely honest with ourselves, many of us would probably choose plate 3, because we believe that the more money that we have, the happier we will be.

Now listen to what Jesus said about possessions:

“Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because your true life is not made up of the things you own, no matter how rich you may be.” (Luke 12:15 Good News Translation)

Jesus said that we need to guard ourselves against greed, which is the desire to have more and more things.

- The reason that Jesus wants us to guard ourselves against greed, is that greed is based on believing the lie that the more things and money that we have, the happier we will be.
- Most of us probably struggle at some level with the “more and more” disease.

Jesus tells us that real life, life that is satisfying comes **not** from having more and more stuff,

- but from our relationship with the living God, who gives us His blessings of love, peace, joy, forgiveness, security, as well as providing for us what we need.

When Jesus told us to guard ourselves against greed, He was not telling us that having things was wrong.

- In fact, He taught us to ask Father God for what we need each day, praying:
- *“Give us today our daily bread.”* (Matthew 6:11)
- What Jesus was telling us to guard against was wanting more than we need; believing the lie that we would be happier if we did.

So, in Jesus’ kingdom, looking at these plates of biscuits, there are enough biscuits for everyone here to have one each.

- Any more would be greedy!
- At the end of the service, we will share them out.

As you go home later, thank Jesus for all that He has given you.

- Be grateful, and look for opportunities to share what you have been given with others,
- because that is the best way to guard against greed – the “more and more” disease.