

## I SHOULD HAVE

Even though three weeks have passed since we held a garage sale at our church, there is an incident from that day that I still think about often. At one point I spotted a person I know walking out to his car with a handful of items he had purchased. When I saw him leaving, I thanked him for coming and supporting our fundraiser. About five minutes later I saw this same man come running back in. The reason why he came back in was he started having second thoughts about not buying a certain item he spotted. He hoped it was still available, but during the five minutes he was out at his car somebody else purchased that item. Disappointed that it had sold, he shared with somebody afterward how he should have bought it when he first saw it.

I am sure we have all experienced this same thing at some point. I experienced this recently myself when it came to bags of topsoil. I happened to be at Sobeys one day and noticed they had bags of black earth topsoil on for just \$1.00 each. I only had room in my car to purchase 5 bags at the time, but I planned to return a few days later to buy some more. There was lots of stock, and I was not worried that they would run out. When I returned to Sobeys a few days later all the bags of black earth topsoil had been purchased. Just like the person at the garage sale, I found myself thinking afterward I should have bought more when I had the chance.

It is not just when it comes to buying things we find ourselves thinking “I should have.” We can also think in these terms when it comes to missed opportunities or an experience, we did not take advantage of when we had the chance. When we find ourselves thinking “I should have”, we are basically acknowledging that our indecisiveness has left us with remorse and regrets. One of the things the Bible encourages us not to be indecisive and be left saying, “I should have,” about has to do with not being properly prepared for Christ’s return.

We see this lesson emphasized by Jesus in a series of three parables He told in **Matthew 25**. In the first parable Jesus shared how ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. These ten bridesmaids were hoping to join in the wedding procession that would end at the groom’s house where the marriage feast would take place. Five of the bridesmaids did not come prepared by having enough olive oil in their lamps in case the bridegroom was late arriving. When their lamps ran out of oil, these five bridesmaids had to leave and run back to buy more oil from a shop. Unfortunately for these five bridesmaids the bridegroom arrived while they were away, and as a result they missed out on joining the procession and

sharing in the marriage feast at the groom's home. Jesus was teaching through this first parable how every person must be responsible for their own spiritual condition, and that part of an individual's preparation when Jesus returns to take His people to heaven was to make sure they had not been indecisive in choosing Him to be their Lord and Savior.

Jesus followed this parable up with the one referred to as ***“Loaned Money.”*** Two servants who were entrusted with bags of money from their master chose to invest the money wisely and they doubled the amount for their owner. A third servant did not choose to invest the money entrusted to him and was not allowed to remain with his master. This parable was meant to teach us to choose wisely when it comes to using the gifts and abilities entrusted to us by God, and not be left afterward thinking, “I should have been wiser in what I was entrusted with.”

Matthew 25 ends with a parable in which Jesus described obedient followers being separated from pretenders and unbelievers upon His return based on the person's choices and actions in showing Christ-like love toward others. Once again Jesus wanted people not to be left with the thought upon His return, “I should have been more sincere in showing my love for Christ by demonstrating it in my love toward others.”

We may be left thinking to ourselves at times “I should have” when it comes to buying things or missing out on certain opportunities, but let's make sure when it comes to Jesus' return, we have not allowed our indecisive nature to have delayed in making the choice to follow Him wholeheartedly. Let's make sure we are not left with regrets upon His return by thinking:

- ***I should have been more committed in using the gifts and talents entrusted to me by God to build His Kingdom.***
- ***I should have been more willing to show Christ-like love toward others.***
- ***I should have been more committed to building treasures in heaven than focusing on treasures here.***

Sometimes we are left with some remorse and regrets knowing we should have done something when we had the opportunity. Let's take this lesson learned from a garage sale to make sure we do not find ourselves saying “I should have” when Christ makes His triumphal return.

**Keep safe and God bless**

**Pastor Dean**