2020 11 15 RETURN ON INVESTMENT.

Judges 4:1-7. Psalm 123.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. Mathew 25:14-30.

I used to teach this subject to students.

Return on Investment means that you invest so much in the expectation that you will receive back what you invested plus interest or/and capital gain.

This topic could be presented as a real downer in that God has invested so much into us and what has the human race returned to God? My aim is to present this topic as one that strengthens us and lifts us closer to God and strengthens us in our living.

**? What other than money can be invested?** Effort, emotions, family connections, ……..

Our Lord Jesus give an example – a parable – parables are meant to teach maybe only one basic truth/lesson. The basic story is that the Boss went away and gave resources to three of his workers – expecting them to use the resources to increase his wealth while he was away. The first two invested wisely and doubled his money but the third who had received the least amount was afraid of failure and its results and hid the money and gave back only what he has received – he was rejected by the boss. The other two were rewarded with more authority.

Note that the boss was not being unreasonable in what he gave and expected because he knew the capabilities of his workers and gave them resources according to their abilities – it was within their ability to use the resource – the one who only receive one portion had the ability to us that resource to gain approval from his boss but he was afraid of the boss and could not bring himself to live out who he was – what his ability and gifts were.

**? When we consider the application of this to us personally - what do we need to ask ourselves?**

We ask ourselves “who am I” what am I naturally good at – what do I find satisfying? What do other people appreciate about me? (I personally find ironing satisfying because I am bringing order out of disorder!!!!) At the Aboriginal Church we used to have a system that the rostered speaker and their family were responsible for the cleaning – including cleaning the toilets – I liked this system because as well as teaching it was serving – like the Lords washing the disciple’s feet – kept one grounded.

**? What has God invested individually in you and myself?**

This earth, our individual life, Gods patience, love, but most dramatically, most urgently, **God invested Himself** –

“ because God so loved His creation He gave His only begotten Son so that whoever believes, trusts in Him will not perish but have everlasting life”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Jesus said that He would ask the Father and He would send His Presence to be with us and that the Holy Spirit would be our guide and comforter and the One who would bring Jesus to us.[[2]](#footnote-2) Salvation and life. This is an immense eternal investment that God has made in you and myself.

What have we returned to God? Obvious though it is do the scales look just a little out of balance? Psalm 116 “**12** What can I give back to God for the blessings he's poured out on me? **13** I'll lift high the cup of salvation - a toast to God! I'll pray in the name of God;[[3]](#footnote-3)

This word ‘salvation’ – if God is total and absolute purity and love then if we are to enter Gods presence and not cause even one grain of dirt to enter with us – it is not possible because we would cause God to not be pure anymore.. while that stain is in us we can not balance the scales of Gods love to us with all our lives of dedication and good works.

On the cross when Jesus took our sins into himself and became sin for us – the cry that came from him was “my God, my God, why have you deserted me?"[[4]](#footnote-4)

*See Gods dilemma* – *God wants back the life and love that He has invested in us –this is the principle, the investment itself – but we cannot come unless we are clean, washed, made new.* We cannot come to the purity of God unless we are pure – this is what Jesus does, He makes us clean and ‘born again’.

*Remember what the Lord said to Peter (tell the whole story) “once you are washed – made clean you do not need to wash again except your feet”[[5]](#footnote-5) –* our feet or in our lives our spirits get soiled each day and we come back to Jesus in truth for forgiveness and cleanness of soul and mind and spirit. *Thus, the investment God made in giving each of our lives is returned to God through the life of Jesus he never sinned and then he took all our guilt and removing them from us, became a curse for us, and in exchange God gives us His rightness*.[[6]](#footnote-6) “As many as receive Him He gave the power to be children of God.”[[7]](#footnote-7) And “It is God who works in you, both want to do and to have the power to do His good will. Do all things without grumbling or arguing; so that you will prove yourself to be blameless and innocent, children of God in a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in this world.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

*Now where is the ROI the interest, the gain on that life that God gave us?* Some people are saved ‘by the skin of their teeth but their lives are burned up, as of no value. You cannot build on any foundation other than Jesus Christ”[[9]](#footnote-9) This maybe because they have come on their death bed, or because their motives were compromised BUT they return to God and are in God s Presence.

Then there is “you have been faithful in little – enter into the joy of your Lord”[[10]](#footnote-10). These are the ones who have endeavoured to walk this life in faithfulness to God and have served others according to the different attributes and gifts from God. The upfrontness of the gift or the hiddenness of their serving matters not at all – it is the quiet faithfulness of the life lived, “I will make you fishers of men”[[11]](#footnote-11) and the love and care walked in that is the interest or the ROI that God says “well done good and faithful servant”[[12]](#footnote-12) to.

We are told to “watch” – our Lord will return to bring all to account for how they have used the life that God has given them. There are some who will say “lord we did this and that in your name” an Jesus will say to them –“depart from me you workers of evil – what you did was not authorised.”[[13]](#footnote-13) We are not told why but emphasis on “we Did” indicates that they were relying on the old system of our ‘earning’ our salvation – the system based on self and set in the Garden of Eden account where Lucifer/the snake told them “you shall be as gods knowing the difference between good and evil”, focus on ourselves.

Our motives must be serving God in the desire to love God first and our fellow humans flowing from that. It is not the type of service that matters, each is essential in the body of Christ. A sore toe effects the whole body. ‘try it’

Service not performed or performed by someone other than the one that the Spirit has gifted for it effects the whole body of Christ. It weakens the one gifted, like the receiver on one talent who was afraid and hid the talent and it effects the person forced to fill that need as well as their own calling.

**?Why do people not fulfill their gifts?** Fear of failure, of gossip, of critics, fear of living, makes a person not full alive. “Awake oh sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you, Christ will give you life.”[[14]](#footnote-14) It is a growing – just get in were God has gifted you and stirred up an interest inside you and growth will come. “We are told that Jesus will make us fishers of men.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Christians are not zombies!

My Grandmother died in her early 50s of cancer, she had 11 children and there is a plaque in the church where they worshiped “She hath done what she could”.

1 Thessalonians tells us that we are wearing “ the breastplate/ i.e. our emotions of faith/trust and love and for the solid protection of our thoughts, our mind of the certainty of our salvation.” This is us individually.

If we come in sorrow/repentance to Jesus’ cross and resurrection God has stated absolutely “I will remember your sins (your failures and omissions your half-life) no more.”[[16]](#footnote-16) It is an unbreakable promise from the power of eternity – our GOD. I will not remember your sins -I have removed them – if we keep going back to them in our emotions and thoughts we are doubting God having made us clean.

“what can separate me from the love of God – absolutely - nothing![[17]](#footnote-17)

The faithful servants are invited to “enter into the joy **of the Lord”[[18]](#footnote-18)**

A POEM

“Jesus, thy blood and righteousness

My beauty are, my glorious dress;

Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,

With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in thy great Day,

For who aught to my charge shall lay?

Fully through these absolved I am

From sin and fear, from guilt and shame’ ..”

I shall stand! Look, the lights of the Father’s house are flooding out to meet me…”[[19]](#footnote-19)

Enter into the joy if your lord

1. John 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John 14-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Psalm 116 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Matthew 27:46 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. John 13:1-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 2 Corinthians 5:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. John 1:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Philippians 2:13-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 1 Corinthians 3:1-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Matthew 25:14-30 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Matthew 25:13-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Matthew 7:21-23 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ephesians 5:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Matthew 4:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Hebrews 8:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Romans 8:31-39 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Matthew 25:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Helmut Thielicke ‘The Prayer that Spans the World. Pg. 47 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)