

A Different Kind of Sowing

The following is an account of an experiment based on the Parable of the Minas, as recorded in Luke 19: 11-26. The story serves well as a suggestion that could be linked to Rogationtide.

One Sunday morning in a Family Service at a village church in East Sussex we had taken up the morning offering and had dedicated it. I then announced that I was going to give away some of the offering to people in the congregation, based on the understanding that like the servants in the parable, they would seek to use the money to make more.

I was looking for ten people to whom I would each entrust £5. We started with challenging the young people, then the adults. Who would take up the challenge? Several people did. In order to cover the church against any possible loss, and to put the minds of those who took the £5 at ease, I guaranteed to replace the money up to the value I had given away, if any failed to make a profit.

As with the Bible account, we set a date for giving account. It was to be our Harvest Thanksgiving, some four or six months away.

When Harvest came, we reminded the congregation of what we had done and invited people to tell us what had happened.



One person had chosen to purchase ingredients for cakes. The cakes were then carefully baked and attractively presented. Permission was gained to sell these to mothers waiting by the gate for their children after school. They were soon sold. The money generated was again invested in ingredients and another batch of cakes was made and similarly sold. There was ample opportunity for further sales and the profit kept increasing.



This kind of exercise has been tried in various churches, and I have heard of entrepreneurial schemes such as purchasing buckets, special cleaning fluid, cloths etc. to set up a car cleaning facility in the community. I can't remember whether any of ours undertook that venture but there were other imaginative schemes.



Undoubtedly, the most intriguing related to a dairy farmer who shared a scheme with his daughter. He went to market and enquired about purchasing young pigs. He purchased four rather poor looking piglets for a total of £8. He loaned the extra £3.

The pigs were given a good diet and soon grew well on the milk generated by the farm. That came free! Once they had put on sufficient weight they were sold at market for £40, making a 500% profit. With the £40 eight more young piglets were purchased at £5 each. These were also fattened before being sold. If I remember correctly around £250 was produced at the Harvest Service!

Barry Osborne – 24th February 2017

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