

TRAGEDY: WAKING UP TO WISDOM

VIDEO TWO

Tragedy stories ask us a question: what if the most dangerous threats in our lives lurk undetected?

Like Ivan's pursuit of comfort and reputation, tragic heroes are destroyed by attitudes that go unnoticed, until it's too late.

Tragedies are a warning. To wake up to things that might be destroying us.

That's Jesus' posture when he's heckled by a man wanting his share of his inheritance. It's not in itself a wrong request. But Jesus notices something sinister, undetected, in this man's heart.

'Greed'. Finding security, joy and life in 'an abundance of possessions'.

So, Jesus tells this man a tragedy.

A wealthy man has a bumper harvest. So he tears down his old barns for bigger ones to store all his grain. Then he can retire early, take life easy.

Perhaps it's our dream.

But this man's life is tragic.

He sees his riches as a pathway to security and 'the good life', but they leave him with nothing.

Firstly, his pursuit leaves him without friends.

Did you notice? This man is talking to, building for, thinking about, himself. He's alone. In the pursuit of riches, he's become the centre of his universe. Others fade into the background. Perhaps we can imagine the kind of father or boss he'd have been.

But even more tragically.

This man's pursuit of possessions blinds him to the God in whose world he lives.

This man has no control over the rain, sun, lack of pests that produced the bumper harvest in the first place. It's all from the Creator, who's intimately involved in this man's life.

Yet the man attributes it all to himself! 10 times he refers to 'I', 'my', or 'myself.' It's all about him.

But the moment he embarks on his retirement. He dies. It's tragic. He never realises that his possessions can't keep him safe. He never realises his life was not about him. The God he has ignored interrupts his plans. And his life is shown to be a waste.

Jesus' story is designed to be a warning to the man seeking his inheritance. Chasing possessions will leave him with nothing.

And it's a warning to us. Each of us is prone to chasing certain things as the most important things in our lives. We value created things over our Creator.

But in our pursuit of success, popularity, wealth, we make ourselves the main character, sidelining others along the way.

And worse, we live without reference to God, failing to realise that all we have comes from Him.

Having turned in on ourselves. We deserve for God to turn from us.

It's tragic! We don't realise building our lives on things instead of God will leave us with nothing.

Jesus offers us a way out of our real-life tragedies.

As he died, Jesus took our tragic consequences instead of us. He takes the judgement for how we have treated God and other people.

And it means that instead of wasting our lives, 'storing up things for ourselves', we can be 'rich towards God', knowing a life of true significance, serving the God who made us.

Jesus tells us this tragedy. Jesus enters into our tragedy. So that we can be called out of tragedy before it's too late. So that we can live.