

## **Views from the Pews: The Kingdom of God – 4 Your task for today**

This week, an exercise. Below are two contemporary parables describing the Kingdom of God. Your task is to decide what each is teaching, and then hand or email your written answers to Kim or myself for marking.

### **Parable 1.**

A wealthy philanthropist decided to deposit a million dollars into everyone's account. He sent a message to each person, telling them what he had done and that this was a free gift given as an expression of his concern for the wellbeing of all people. All they had to do was to withdraw the money and start enjoying it. Further, when this current gift was exhausted, he would automatically deposit another million in their account and that there was no limit to this generosity. People reacted in four ways. Some accepted the gift with gratitude, some held back wondering what the catch was, some did not believe his message (thinking, if it looks too good to be true then it probably is), and some just said, "You can keep your money, we don't want a bar of it." Some of these responses saddened the philanthropist. However, the rejection by some made no difference to the gift. The money was still in their accounts even if they didn't want it. And in his generosity, the man kept on with his messages to people, hoping that more might come to realise it was true and take him up on his offer.

### **Parable 2**

The Kingdom of God is like a new sort of rugby tournament. As now, rugby players have to make continual choices between moves that co-operate with the other members of their own team to get a collective result, or compete against their own colleagues for personal credit. But under the new rules, the ref awards points for sportsmanship, not for scoring tries. Teams made up of co-operative players who always play generously and well, whatever the score, tend to collect more points than teams that tolerate too much aggressive internal competition. The players who embrace the new rules find it easier to collect the most points, but no one is penalised for making a mistake. The referee seems far more concerned with whether the players respect and value one another (and the referee), and play the game with heart, rather with awarding points. In the end, all the players win, and the tournament score doesn't matter.

*Phil Wilson*