

## 08-19-18 – Parable of the Rich Fool – Luke 12:13-21

*Jesus talked about money in one-sixth of the Gospels and one-third of the Parables, including this one. Jesus was not a fund raiser. He dealt with money matters, however, because money matters. It's a surprise so many people, Christians included, that the Bible has so much to say about this subject.*

*God has given us three ways on this earth to invest in eternity. Two of them are up for discussion, and we approach them with open-mindedness; we can never seem to hear enough about them, but the third seems to be nobody else's business.*

*The preacher who fails to address **time** and how we spend it is considered derelict in his duty. The preacher who overlooks teaching on **talents** and gifts that help the church body function smoothly and well and even efficiently is not doing his job.*

*But let the man address the subject of **treasure** and he's back on that age-old subject and just trying to get our money. (Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations and Quotes, p. 231).*

Today we are going to look at money, wealth, giving, and greed. If you want to leave now, I understand.

We will be looking at another of Jesus' parables. The good news is that next week we will look at the last parable for this series – and all the people said? ...

Today we will look at the Parable of the Rich Fool. Even the title sounds bad.

**READ: Luke 12:13-21 (Bible)**

If you look at chapter 16, you will see more examples regarding wealth. In fact, the last parable we will look at next week is found in that chapter. So, Jesus paid attention to money and wealth. His parables and teachings reflect this. We shy away from such teachings. Why? Maybe because we don't want to be put on the spot regarding our wealth and giving to the Kingdom of God. If this is your thinking, then you are sadly mistaken. Yes – we all need money and many acquire wealth – not a problem. Everything has to do with the motivation of our hearts – as it usually does.

*A young man was prompted by his father's example of giving at church – an area in which he had been negligent – to do the same. So the next Sunday he gave a dollar. He told the pastor about it Sunday night and commented, "And would you believe I found a dollar in the parking lot! Next Sunday I plan to give twenty!" (p. 390)*

What's wrong with this picture or story? What is the motivation of this man who gave a dollar and found a dollar? Is it to advance the kingdom of God or to get even more in return for his giving?

God doesn't need our money to grow the church and the kingdom. The giving thing is a lesson for us, not Him.

Before we came to faith in Jesus, we were living on a shoestring – week to week, month to month. Due to Corinne's diligence, we began to see a light at the end of the tunnel – dimly. Then we came to faith and started to learn about tithing and giving our all to God. It was a scary and stressful experience.

We read the Scriptures for ourselves – and it was preached in our church at the time...

**Mal. 3:8-10 – *Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob Me. But, you ask, "How are we robbing you? In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing Me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the flood gates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that where will not be room enough to store it."***

We decided to tithe even if we couldn't afford it. We have been blessed financially ever since. We may not be wealthy in the world's eyes, but we have nothing to worry about. I don't think we do. I don't worry about money ever – anyway. That was Corinne's job, but she is at peace with things now too.

Back to our story...

Someone in the audience addresses Jesus... ***"Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."*** What does this reveal about his motivation? Who is he concerned about in this situation? Himself only! He is looking to get what he can from the inheritance and is looking for his brother to give it to him. However, his brother seems reluctant in this scenario. The man then appeals to Jesus.

At this time, a Rabbi was, in many cases, also judge and arbitrator in social and ethical cases, but not legal cases. Of course, Jesus flips the tables around back to the man.

Jesus replies, ***"Who appointed Me a judge or an arbitrator between you?"***

Jesus appears to be shucking his responsibility here. Or maybe the guy was out of line asking this type of question to a Rabbi rather than a legal judge. Having been in the crowd and hearing Jesus' teachings, he appeals to this wise teacher for justice in his favor.

**Matt. 7:1 – *Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.***

**v. 15 – Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.**

As we look at the Scriptures, isn't greed the motivating force behind all that is going on here so far? He wants the judge to make his brother give over his part of an inheritance. He wants what's coming to him monetarily. He only cares about himself and his own wellbeing. He is looking to amass wealth.

Greed seeks worldly things – not true living. Material possessions become a substitute for the proper object of a person's search for and worship of – GOD!

**Greed is idolatry –**

**Col. 3:5 – Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.**

So, Jesus tells them a parable about a rich man who gains even more wealth than he had before. His harvest is going to be overwhelming, so he is faced with a quandary...

**v. 16-17 – The ground of a certain rich man yielded and abundant harvest. He thought to himself, “What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.”**

*When you fix your eyes on things, invariably it leads to materialism. You fix your eyes on things and you will continually be attracted to gadgets, money, an abundance of the plastic, chrome, metal, wood, all the elements about us. You will continually be dissatisfied. The millionaire, John D. Rockefeller, was asked one time, “How much does it take to satisfy a man completely?” He said, “It takes a little bit more than he has.”*

Let's look at the man's arrogance and pride as he ponders his dilemma...

I have so much now. What shall I do? If he has so much now, why isn't that enough?  
I know – I'll tear down my existing barns and build bigger barns so I can keep all my wealth to myself. Really?

Isn't that greed? Isn't that self-centeredness and self-reliance? It's all about him.

At this point, Jesus tells that God Himself speaks to this man...

**v. 20 – God said to him, “You Fool! – This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?”**

Who was this man thinking about? He wasn't thinking about the less fortunate around him. He wasn't thinking about a family inheritance (as the original question to Jesus was thinking about). He wasn't thinking about anyone else but himself. He was filled with greed – whether he realized it or not.

Many times we sin during the normal course of life without realizing it is sin. What are you doing lately that may indicate you are thinking about yourself above others before God? This rich man proves his true motivation by his own words. I'll then relax and live well. I will have no worries or concerns. I'll just take it easy and enjoy life from now on.

Can anyone rely on what we have here and now? As the parable states, we can lose our lives here on earth at any moment and for any reason God puts in place. What will happen to all that we hoarded or greedily set aside for ourselves when that happens? We never know when God will tap us on the shoulder and demand the end of our earthly life. Are you prepared? Have you set aside wealth for the kingdom of God, or are you greedily holding on to the treasure He has given you to be stewards of?

**v. 21 – *This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.***

Did you hear this statement out of God's Word? This is a serious admonishment. We need to be mindful of our motivation concerning money at all times. It is the easiest of areas to run astray. If we lose our control over how we view our wealth, we will lose control over how we align with God. If we keep our wealth in check, we will keep our relationship with God in check.

*Regarding this parable... Borneaux, a French painter, musing about this parable, was so moved over it, he took out a canvas, a pallet, paint and brush, and began to paint the scene. He painted a man sitting behind a desk, rather portly in size, several bags of money on the front of his desk. Behind him was a shelf, on which was a small bag, as if for a very special purpose. Outside the window of that man's home was a bumper crop blowing in the afternoon breeze and warm sunshine beating down on it.*

*Then Borneaux painted the opposite side of the canvas. Same man, same desk, same bags of money, same little treasured bag behind him on the shelf, same crops, same window, but now everything was covered with dust. The death angel had his hand on the man's shoulder. And the angel's lips were pursed, as if to say, "Fool... Fool!" (p. 390)*

Jesus said, ***“And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”***

Yet God Himself calls the man in our parable, “Fool.” I was surprised how many times the word fool exists in the Bible and most in the Old Testament. In the O.T. sense, fool means – *One who rejects the knowledge and precepts of God as a basis for life.*

God is not saying anything about eternal life as He addresses this unwise man. Rather – He deals with the disposition of his possessions. He will have to leave it all behind – as will we all.

***Ecc. 2:18-19 - I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.***

The parable ends with the words “Rich toward God.” This is to show the reality of things from a Godly perspective. All your collecting and saving of wealth is meaningless to God. Only what is used to further the Kingdom of God counts.

***Matt. 6:19-20 - “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”***

Where are you with regard to your money, your wealth, your giving? Some are in dire straits and don’t know how you’re going to pay your bills. Is your focus on yourself and gaining as much as you can and then some? Or are you furthering the work of the Kingdom of God with your giving? If you are not currently tithing (giving 10 % of your income to the work of God – through the church), then consider testing out God’s promise to you. Start off small – tithe on something (gifts you receive, net income, whatever you decide). Watch God work in your life with blessings you never expected. Don’t give to get back; that’s the wrong motivation. Give to give and before long you will love to give and God will bless you.