

“Parable of the Rich Fool”

Introduction – Luke 12:13-21

This is an important teaching on having the right priorities in our lives! 😊

I. THE SETTING (VERSES 13-15)

Luke 12:13-15 (NIV)

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” **14** Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” **15 THEN HE SAID TO THEM, “WATCH OUT! BE ON YOUR GUARD AGAINST ALL KINDS OF GREED; A MAN’S LIFE DOES NOT CONSIST IN THE ABUNDANCE OF HIS POSSESSIONS.”**

Jesus had just taught on our great value to God and on the importance of standing for Him. In the midst of this teaching a man interrupted Jesus to ask that he take his side in a financial dispute.

Luke 12:4-12 (NIV)

4 “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. **5** But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. **6** Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. **7** Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. **8** “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. **9** But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. **10** And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. **11** “When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, **12** for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”

So you have to wonder if this guy was even listening to what Jesus said as it appears he is consumed with his perceived injustice with his brother. ***WARNING TO US ABOUT NOT APPLYING JESUS' WORDS!** Now according to the law of the day, the elder brother received two-thirds of the inheritance and the younger brother received one-third. So he must have been the younger brother wanting half not one-third. Now disputes like this were normally settled by Rabbi's. So the man bringing this to Jesus is recognizing His position and Jesus could see right through the request about this man's heart being filled with selfishness and thinking life was about all our possessions. Greed is a problem in the human heart throughout history! God help us to see that it is not the abundance of our possessions that makes our lives fulfilling!

II. THE PARABLE (verses 16-20)

Luke 12:16-20 (NIV)

16 And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. **17** He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' **18** "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **19** And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" **20** "But 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?'

This man had been a successful farmer, a prosperous business owner. There is nothing wrong with that! We are called to make the most of our giftings and talents as we looked at in the Parable of the Talents. His problem is that he is just self-focused! A narcissist, it's all about me! It doesn't say he wanted to help others, to reach out and share his blessings. He just wanted to make sure he had more room to store all his blessings and then kick back and enjoy life unconcerned about the world around him.

This man didn't have eternity in mind at all! He just thought about himself in the now!

Listen to the warnings in scripture about this selfish attitude:

I Timothy 6:5-10, 17-19 (NIV)

5 and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. **6** But godliness with contentment is great gain. **7** For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. **8** But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. **9** Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. **17** Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. **18** Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. **19** In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 6:19-24 (NIV)

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **20** But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **22** "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. **23** But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! **24** "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or

he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Paul's words to the Colossians:

Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV)

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

So what can we learn from this?

III. THE LESSON (verses 21)

Luke 12:21 (NIV)

21 “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”

Now as the teaching goes on past this parable may we take this to heart:

Luke 12:22-34 (NIV)

22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. **23** Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. **24** Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! **25** Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life ? **26** Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? **27** “Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. **28** If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! **29** And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. **30** For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that

you need them. **31** But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. **32** “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. **33** Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. **34** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Conclusion

So it is not sinful to have money and possessions. What is sinful is that if that is all we center in on is our own comfort, our own lifestyle. We don't think to share, to help, to be a generous person to the world around us!

We are called to let our light shine! To be an example as Paul told the Corinthians:

II Corinthians 9:6-11 (NIV)

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. **7** Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8** And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. **9** As it is written: “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” **10** Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. **11** You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.