

The Parables
Luke 12:13-21

Woodlawn!

- Free!
- Tonight, 5 PM at PCC

Neighborhood Underground!

- Less than two weeks away!
- Let's pack this place!

PRAY...

Luk 12:13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

Luk 12:14 But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?"

Luk 12:15 And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

While the gospels have other scenes like this with Jesus ("command these stones to be bread" – Satan; "make my sons the greatest in the kingdom" – mother of James and John; "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" – Pharisees), I have to think it happened even more often than the gospels gave it air time.

- Sometimes the things we ask Jesus are totally meaningless to Him.
 - WE'VE made them meaningful – WE think they're important.
 - But Jesus says, "whatever – it doesn't matter."
- If v13 were in the form of a prayer, then Jesus' answer was ... (no.)
- And remember that Luke is the most detailed, word-picture guy among the 4 gospels writers.
 - Look again at the narration;
 - Someone said to Jesus... "Make my brother give me money."
 - Jesus said to him... "I believe you've mistaken me for somebody who cares about such things."
 - Then Jesus said to THEM...
 - This poor dude!
 - Jesus not only says "I can't believe you bothered me with that," He removes His gaze from him, turns to the 12 and others with them, and uses this guy's plight as a teachable moment for the crowd.
 - This guy... He sees Jesus, and could have asked anything in the world He wished!
 - People say, "If you found a genie and you could only ask ONE thing..."
 - ***This guy's question was a huge deal in the culture, but a meaningless thing for the Master.***
 - And let's make sure you understand that Jesus' "no" answer wasn't...
 - "No, your brother shouldn't share the inheritance with you."
 - It was "No, I won't tell him to do it. Why? Because your life doesn't consist in such things, and I'm the Lord of LIFE."
 - IOW, whether you come into some money or DON'T come into some money holds NO SIGNIFICANCE WHATSOEVER.

- Constist = esti = have meaning, profit, value, remain + wrestle.
 - This word is so common in the NT, it's used 889 times.
 - The most common English translation: "is"
 - IOW, a man's life consists – a man's life IS – whether he has more money or less money.
 - On more way to view Jesus' answer: "I care nothing about whether or not you get your inheritance. I DO care about whether or not you covet your inheritance."
- And then he tells a parable to illustrate the point...

Luk 12:16 And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully,

Luk 12:17 and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'

Luk 12:18 And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

Luk 12:19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

Luk 12:20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

Luk 12:21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

I would first propose to you, church, that it doesn't take an Einstein to understand this parable.

- Jesus basically sums up its meaning in v21:
 - **Storing up treasure for yourself is foolish.**
 - **Being rich toward God is wise.**
 - Some of you are like, "Good – I don't have any to lay up anyway!"
 - But that would be missing the point.
 - Jesus doesn't want this to even be a niggling thought in the back of your mind
 - That should you ever acquire wealth, that it should be stored up for YOU.

Now, let me go back and break this down piece by piece...

Luk 12:16 And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully...

- Jesus begins the parable with the man already being what? (rich)
 - And this rich man had land
 - Neither of those two BASIC things (wealth and land) are ever – EVER – condemned in scripture at face value.
 - First, God Himself is RICH!
 - And Adam and Eve were rich in possessions – the whole earth!
 - Abraham was rich
 - Isaac and Jacob were rich
 - Joseph became rich
 - Moses was given into the house of Pharaoh
 - God eventually gave His people very RICH land
 - David and Solomon were rich
 - And many other OT characters...

- The issue wasn't money or lands, it was what was done with the money or lands that always concerned – and still today concerns – God.

Luk 12:17 and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'

- Immediately, this “good problem to have” gets this rich man off track in 2 separate ways:
 - 1) “He thought to himself” = dialogizomai = talked to himself = He was anxious about this abundance he foresaw coming his way.
 - 7 years ago, the movie “Up” by Pixar was released.
 - 7 years later, an entire nation still considers “squirrel!” to be funny in the proper context.
 - I believe **MONEY** – especially the anticipation of it coming your way – is the mother of all squirrels.
 - It's tax season – some of you have a return check coming, and you've already got it spent.
 - Perhaps you uttered a prayer like, “Jesus, please let me get a good tax return,” just like this poor dude.
 - Honestly, I think Jesus told you He doesn't care.
 - Now, whether or not you think you heard Him differently, I suppose you'll have to show me the verses that suggest He really cares about such things.
 - According to this and other similar passages, He thinks very little of the amount of money you have, or will have.
 - His concern rests in you coveting the very thing He says has no bearing – no value – when it comes to your life.
 - 2) He thinks of them as “his” crops
 - But God's Word says
 - Deu 10:14 Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.
 - Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.
 - 1Ti 6:17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

Luk 12:18 And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.'

Luk 12:19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."'

- Note this man already had barns.
- **Clearly, Jesus is putting a “bar” on how much is enough – in the eyes of the Lord.**
 - And not for the reason you might expect.
 - This parable is a teaching against being anxious about money.
 - We don't need to read anything else into this parable, especially since Jesus elaborates on it quite a bit in the following verses.
 - Luk 12:25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

- Luk 12:26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?
- Luk 12:27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- Luk 12:28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!
- Luk 12:29 And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried.
- Luk 12:30 For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.
- Luk 12:31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.
- There is a clear difference between the man's outlook in v18 and his subsequent outlook after he devises the plan to build more storage.
 - "Ahhh... now I do have to be anxious. I have all I need."

Luk 12:20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

Luk 12:21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

- Now, this is a PARABLE.
- There is no account of a real life rich guy who did this, therefore, no account of God waiting eagerly for the man finish building his barns and packing them with grain and goods only to kill him on the spot and say, "Ha! Fool!"
- Jesus is showing how much God is distraught when His abundance of blessings entrusted to mankind are stored up rather than freely given.
- Faithful with much, entrusted with even more.

This parable, and many other similar teachings, outline God's economy.

- God's economy and man's economy can be easily distinguished with one simple sentence:
 - God's economy says "Give away what I give to you, and I promise to keep providing." (faith)
 - Man's economy says "Store away what you acquire, and life will be less stressful." (no faith)

When it came to MONEY, many people tended to leave the presence of Christ sad, mad, or glad.

- **Sad**
 - The rich young ruler went away sad
- **Mad**
 - Judas, the Pharisees, and other rich Biblical characters were offended and mad
- **Glad**
 - And others like Zacchaeus, became glad
 - More on these three responses later...

Few things rile up a God-seeking person more than a discussion about earthly possessions.

- Because eventually, somebody asks the question, "Is it a sin to be rich?"

- Well, I hope not, because just about everybody in this room is richer than 90% of the world's general population.
- But is it a sin to desire wealth, to store it up, and use it upon yourself?

Now, whenever I – personally – pose a question about whether or not something is a sin, I like to point out a few things:

- 1) Don't fear the answers.
 - If something is a sin, repentance is where God is leading you, which only ends up GOOD.
- 2) If it's pointed out that something you've felt is NOT a sin really IS a sin, don't defend yourself.
 - Just ask forgiveness, receive it, and seek wisdom moving forward.
 - I once made a friend of mine really angry one day in a discussion like this.
 - We were talking about road rage.
 - I suggested we indeed sin when we say "hey idiot" to the poor decisions some drivers make, even though said driver can't hear me.
 - My reasoning:
 - I devalued that person
 - I placed myself above that person
 - I think poorly of that person's ability to do a simple thing like drive wisely.
 - "What kind of a person does that?" I think to myself...
 - I rarely consider that this person just happened to make that move in front of me only – I figure that person ALWAYS drives like a fool.
 - None of the above thoughts are HEALTHY, God-honoring thoughts.
 - Most of them are rooted in pride and a false sense of being personally "wronged" – "Do I have a sign on the front of my car that says 'cut me off!'"
 - His reasoning was two-fold:
 - 1) If that person can't hear me or doesn't see me irritated at them, how can that be a sin?
 - I conceded that it might not be a sin against that driver, but it is a sin of both pride and overall character judgment.
 - Nothing about my actions honor the Lord, nothing about my actions bring fruit, nothing about my mindset draws me closer to God... I could go on.
 - Anyway, he got really angry and felt attacked.
 - I never talked about his driving habits – can't remember if I ever got in the car with him driving.
 - But man, I stepped into something there...
- So, again, I want to encourage you as I eventually encouraged him:
 - If we get offended when someone has a decent argument (right or wrong) about what constitutes a sin, we're probably in a not-so-good place in our lives about that particular issue.
 - Don't go looking to fight about what constitutes a sin, but don't be afraid to explore it either.

So, back to the contextual question: Is it a sin to desire wealth, to store it up, and use it upon yourself?

- Let's see what Jesus says...

Seek first the kingdom

Sell everything you have, give to the poor, come follow me.

Doesn't mean he stops giving – it means if you'll keep giving it away, He'll keep providing for you to keep it up.

What a sad state we find ourselves in when we base His love and care for us in how easy we have it in life.

This message doesn't mean

- I shouldn't have a budget
- I should be homeless
- I should be frivolous with my money

Hebrews 13:5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.