

The Parables of Our Lord

The Parable of “The Rich Fool”

Sunday July 31st, 2022

(Update on Pastor Dale, Denise, Erick, Daniber, etc)

By way of reminder:

- Jesus was the greatest teacher who ever lived
- The crowds were astonished by the way He taught
- He used parables
 - Only used by Jesus in the NT
 - Rare in the OT (Nathan the Prophet & King David is one example)
- Parable means “to throw something alongside something else” ie, a comparison thrown alongside a truth
- Jesus used parables to reveal deeper truths to those who have been given understanding but used them in judgment against those who had not been given understanding.
- Main theme of most parables was the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Heaven)
- We never interpret parables allegorically
 - Look for a single, clear main point in a given parable (though there are sometimes exceptions)

Today we'll be looking at “The Parable of The Rich Fool”. Read Luke 12:13-21.

Jesus is speaking to a massive crowd about the Kingdom of God:

- He warns His disciples against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees “beware [their] leaven”

- Fear God rather than man
- If one acknowledges Christ before men, Christ proclaims that person before the angels & if one denies Christ before men, Christ will deny him before angels
- Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

In the middle of these **spiritual** lessons, a man runs up and demands that Jesus settle a dispute about an inheritance even though it had nothing at all to do with what the Lord was teaching.

There were rules about how property/inheritances were to be divided among after a father passed away. In that case, they could go to a rabbi and he would act as attorney and teacher. But this man doesn't go to Jesus in submission to Him as a student would submit himself to a Teacher. And that gives us an indication of what weighed on this guy's heart. Obviously, it wasn't what the Lord was teaching. It was materialism that energized his thinking and his heart. Is that true of some of us? Is that true of me? Is that true some of the time? ALL of the time?

This man could have gone to any other rabbi but he went to Jesus, why?

- Jesus taught with power and authority, unlike the scribes of the day?
- Jesus was becoming influential in his eyes?
- Peer (crowd) pressure?

Either way, Jesus was turned-off by the guy's question. He was interrupted by someone whose only interest is in material possessions rather than what he can LEARN from Jesus and apply to his life. And the Lord responds with a sharp rebuke: "*Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?*". Jesus wasn't in the business of adjudicating cases where earthly possessions are being disputed.

Then, in front of **everyone**, Jesus says *“Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”* This man was motivated by the thinking that what was important in life was “stuff”.

The recent lottery had me thinking: What was it? \$1 billion? Many of us might be tempted to think it would be wonderful to win that amount. But God forbid that I ever would: it's a CURSE!

What happened to big lottery winners historically?

- Bankruptcies
- Drug abuse
- Homelessness
- Suicides
- Murders
- A lot of ruin

Pauls tells us in 1 Timothy 6:9-10 that *“...those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 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.”*

The **love** of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And before the parable, Jesus says *“take care and be on guard against all **covetousness**”*. Why? Covetousness includes jealousy, resentment, and greed for things that belong to others. People do all sorts of awful things in the name of covetousness.

If covetousness is so ruinous, why do so many churches tell us to pursue **as a goal** the very *thing* that Scripture clearly teaches will ruin us? Why has the Christianization of “The American Dream” become so popular? One of the reasons that the so-called “prosperity gospel” is so

dangerous is because it promises **exactly** what the flesh wants. The TRUE Gospel says to your flesh, “You must die!”. The prosperity gospel says to your flesh, “You get to live!” and “You get everything that you, in your sinful, carnal state ever wanted”. That is NOT the gospel. Christ came to redeem us from sin.

This parable of our Lord starts by telling us that the rich man’s land produced plentifully. The very providence of God Himself is what has provided this bumper crop. Irreverence and ingratitude are two major characteristics of our fallenness. After all, we are RECIPIENTS of God’s providence and kindness and grace. But this guy in the parable gives no thought to thanking God or even acknowledging Him as the source of his wealth (ingratitude and irreverence). Then he starts talking to himself and he asks himself how he can store and hoard this new blessing. He gives no thought to enriching his neighbors or his church. He then answers himself by proclaiming he will wreck the old barns and build bigger ones.

This man was rich but he was also a fool. Having wealth isn’t bad. Being married to it **IS**. Biblically speaking, a “fool” isn’t someone who is dumb. Being referred to as a fool (biblically) is a MORAL judgment. In Psalm 14, David tells us that “It is the FOOL who says in his heart, “There is no God”.” The last thing on his mind is God and he uses personal pronouns to describe the blessings he has: “My crops. My barns. My grains. My goods. My soul”. He has no interest in spiritual things.

But here comes something awful. “[20] [...] **God said to him...**”. The whole parable, this man is talking to himself but now God speaks. He says, “FOOL! **Tonight** your soul is required of you”. This guy won’t ever touch another dollar. He won’t be waking up tomorrow to look out over his fields and watch the harvest come in. He isn’t going to see those new barns being built because now he’s dead. All the “stuff” he’s accumulated, all his wealth, will be given to people who are

just going to fight over it. Great application for us today. Life's not about the fruits of our labor. It's totally fine to have those. But life is under God's control; our births and deaths are all ordained by God. Hearses don't pull U-Hauls. He who has the most toys when he dies DOESN'T win.

Finally, from verse 21, "*So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God..*". In front of the whole crowd, Jesus identified this guy, who ran up and demanded an arbitration over an inheritance, as a fool.

Where do I store MY treasures? There is a lot to be said and there is a lot of application for our own lives today. Having wealth isn't bad. Not at all. But if that's where our hearts are, let's perform an examination of our hearts and realign them to Christ. Jesus says in Matthew (6:21), "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*". He must always be our object of worship, no matter how large or how small our wealth is.