

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL // Luke 12:13-21

Message from the series, The Gospel of Luke

We live in a culture devoted to stuff—but stuff never satisfies. We own nothing; everything is on loan from the Lord. Jesus did not come to bring us possessions, but to bring us to God. To keep this perspective, we must be on the offense when it comes to greed in our hearts. Jesus uses a parable to illustrate this practice by using the negative example of the rich fool.

How do you guard yourself against greed?

1. Thank God for everything you have and everything you don't have (v.16-17)

The man in the parable is already a rich man, and he has more than he needs. He continually talks within himself (“What shall I do?”), but there is an omission in his life—he doesn’t talk with God, and he doesn’t thank God for what he has.

Thankfulness humbles us and gives us a proper perspective—we are to be good stewards of what God has given us.

2. Give God your grain and your gain (v. 18)

The man in the parable repeatedly uses the word “my,” pointing to the problem of earned wealth—he thinks it all belongs to him. In reality, everything we have is on loan from God, and he gives us extra. We should consider what the extra in our lives looks like and who could benefit from us sharing it.

We are not here to build our kingdoms; we are here to build God’s kingdom.

3. Serve God with your times and talents (v.19)

The man in the parable is still wrapped up in his inner monologue, speaking to his “Soul,” but not to God. He imagines that his wealth now entitles him to retire, to enjoy the good life. But God doesn’t call us to retirement in the sense of checking out and doing whatever we want. We may change jobs or gear down, but we are still serving God. Our goal ought to be enough income and health so that we can serve without distraction.

4. Seek God for wisdom and prepare to finish well (v. 20-21)

This man had prepared everything except his soul and in the end that was what was required of him. There is nothing wrong with having money, but there is something wrong with loving money. Wealth toward self is poverty toward God. Don’t squander your wealth on self—use it for God’s glory. We desire to be men and women who are faithful to the end, to pursue God and not possessions, and to be rich toward God, finding our deepest joy and satisfaction in serving, worshipping, and fellowshiping with him.

Jesus was the richest man who ever lived and he gave it all away—he became poor that we might become rich in spiritual blessings.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are we thankful people? How do we cultivate a posture of gratitude and a resistance to discontent in our own lives?
2. What kind of “extra” do we have in our lives? How are we stewarding and sharing what God has given us? How are we serving God with our time and talents?
3. Are we pursuing a life of ease or a life of service? How does this parable change our perspective on our jobs, income, and time?