

- ***READ Luke 12:16-21*** As Jesus is literally being engulfed by thousands of people who are coming to hear what this fascinating Man had to say, our Lord continues teachings that focus on different aspects of the life of one who might desire to be a citizen of the kingdom He has come to establish. Earlier in the chapter, we see Jesus giving warnings specifically to His disciples concerning the dangers of the Pharisees and the difficulties that they would eventually come to face. **(Luke 12:1-12)** Yet as the chapter progresses, we see a demand coming from the crowd as someone tells Jesus to force a brother to split the family inheritance with him. Jesus first asks who made Him a judge over the people, but then he uses the opportunity to teach a very important lesson concerning the way we approach earthly possessions.
- It is at this point that Jesus shares this parable of the rich man who's land was extremely productive. This man recognized his great fortune and realized that he needed more room for his crops. He then begins making these grand plans for everything he had. He would tear down old barns and big builder barns. He knew that after doing all of this that he would be able to just kick back and enjoy the great life that he can built all for himself.
- However, God calls this man a fool, and states that his soul would be required presumably before he was able to truly enjoy all of the fruits of all of his labor. This must be a pretty serious offense for Jesus to refer to someone as a fool seeing as how He takes such a thing pretty seriously according to **Matthew 5:22**. However, we must recognize that Jesus is able to know the hearts of men, and thus He knows when someone is truly being a fool. The foolishness of this man could even be clearly seen through his actions. There are some important lessons to be learned from this short parable, and we will use our time this evening considering this foolish man of Luke 12. We want to understand what made him a fool and then consider just a couple of lessons from the entire context of this parable for us to think upon as points of application within our own lives.

I. The man was a fool because:

A. He gave God no consideration in his plans.

1. One of the first things that really stand out to me about this parable told by Jesus is just how self centered this man was in his plan making. In the three verses that contain words of the rich man, I count thirteen different times that he uses personal pronouns to refer to himself. There are a great number of "I"s and "my"s, but that is about it when it come to who he is considering in his plans. He knew what he wanted, how he wanted to do it, and what his reward would be once his plans had been fulfilled. Notice that this man didn't even mention anything about a family to bless with his produce. It was only all about himself and his desires.
2. While we often attribute the principle of **Psalm 14:1**, *"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"* to those who are atheists and live in open rebellion against God's will, I'd like to suggest that this man wasn't behaving all that differently in the way he approached his future plans. He gave zero consideration to God and His will for his life, so he might as well have said aloud, *"there is no God"* because that is how he was behaving.
3. We should know well that our failure to consider God in the way we live this life will only lead to disaster. Not just once, but twice in the Proverbs do we find the words of wisdom, *"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."* **(Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25)** This was the continual problem with Israel. They thought that they knew what was best for them (not destroying all of the native Canaanite people, having an earthy king, dividing the kingdom, etc), but Jeremiah recognized that their foolishness had only led them farther away from God. In **Jeremiah 10:23**, Jeremiah admits that without God...man is hopelessly lost. *"I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself. Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps."* When men decide to ignore God...it will only further establish their own foolishness.

B. He gave God no credit for the blessings that he enjoyed.

1. Further, not only did this man not make any consideration for God when he made out his plans, but there was going to be no consideration of God once he achieved his plans. *"And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take you're ease, eat, drink and be merry.'"* (Luke 12:19) Was there anything wrong with this man taking some ease at the end of his labor in order to enjoy the spoils? Of course there wasn't anything wrong with that! In fact, the Preacher of Ecclesiastes says *"There is nothing better for a man to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God."* (Ecclesiastes 2:24)
2. Now, what was the difference between what this rich man of Luke 12 did and what the Preacher is advocating in **Ecclesiastes 2:24**? There is a big different between the two actions. While the prescribed action of Ecclesiastes acknowledges a recognition of God, the man of Luke 12 completely ignored the fact that God was the one who had supplied his fortune and success.
3. Instead of taking a moment to give glory to God for His blessings, this man, again, completely ignored even the existence of God and took all fo the credit for the good things he enjoyed. There was no acknowledgement of God being the giver of every good gift (**James 1:17**), and there certainly was no giving of appreciation to God for His blessings. This man completely ignored God's will for his thankfulness (**I Thessalonians 5:18**) and for that he is considered a fool.

C. He took the future for granted.

1. Intertwined with this man's failure to give God any sort of acknowledgement or appreciation for his good fortune was the fact that he behaved as if all of this was guaranteed to come to pass. I believe this can be assumed based upon God's response to the man in **v.20**, *"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your souls is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared.'"* This man just assumed that everything was going to go just as he had planned, but God stops him in his tracks and informs him that these things were not set in stone because his soul was going to be required of him that very night. He was a fool to behave as if just because he made plans that they for sure were going to take place. Again, there was no consideration for God's will and plan.
2. This probably brings to your mind the same Text that it brings to mine in **James 4:13-16**. In these verses, the inspired writer James seeks to remind the reader that they are not guaranteed to have their plans go just as they have planned them. They might plan to go to this place and spend some time, build a business, and make a profit...but that doesn't mean that it is all going to happen in that way. We don't know for certain what the next day will bring, so he ends this portion of his letter by giving what we ought to do. *"Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.'"* (**James 4:16**) We see that there isn't a problem with making plans for the future. In fact, we should be a people who are making plans for the future, but we should do so with God being considered and recognizing that the future is not guaranteed.

D. He stored up treasure in the wrong place.

1. Finally, let's consider that this man was a fool because he had spent all of his time storing up treasure in the wrong place. This is Jesus's conclusion of the parable of the rich fool in this text. *"So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."* (Luke 12:21) This man had spent and was planning on spending so much of his time building up an abundance of earthly wealth...and wouldn't you know it...he would never get to set back and enjoy it like he had planned. What's worse, he had done all of this to the neglect of building up any sort of riches toward God. This man had ignored God in his plans and thankfulness, and for that he had nothing to show in regards any sort of strong spiritual wellbeing once he stood before God. He was as weak and poor spiritually as was possible.

2. Yet, this weakness was not simply seen only because he died that very night. Instead, consider that his spiritual weakness could've been exposed even if his body had not been touched. All that would've been necessary in order to expose his spiritual weakness would've been for a strong storm to come and destroy his barns and crops or for a fire to ravish his material wealth. What would've this man have done at that point? What would've he had to lean upon? The answer is nothing at all. his heart would've been helplessly exposed because his treasure would've been destroyed. This is precisely why Jesus demands that we not make it a focus of storing up treasures on earth. **(Matthew 6:19-21)** These things can be gone in the blink of any eye, and if we are poor towards God then we will have nothing at all in this life. This rich man failed to realize that, and for his mistake he is known forever as a fool. Yet, this fool and his parable are able to teach us some important lessons, so let's close with two big ones.

II. Lessons Learned:

A. Greed is a life destroyer.

1. The whole reason Jesus even tells this parable is because of a demand that is put forth by someone in the crowd. An assumed jilted brother comes to Jesus and demands that He force his brother to split the family inheritance with him. Jesus first responds by asking who it was that deemed him as being an arbitrator over the people, but then He gets into the serious response of warning against greed. *"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed, for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."* **(Luke 12:15)** What does Jesus mean by this? Here are a couple observations.
2. Firstly, this man was willing to take his own family to "court" over money. This man, and presumably his brother who very well might have been greedy himself, were willing to be at each other's throat over material wealth. They were willing to possibly rip an entire family apart over money. Does this not sound like a major problem to us? It should because this greed on every side was threatening to split this family in two. He wanted his money and there wasn't anything in his mind that was going to stop it from getting it.
3. But secondly, Jesus states that even when someone has a great amount of possessions that does not mean they are truly wealthy. This is when He launches into the parable of the rich fool. This man thought that he was truly something because he had accumulated so much wealth and fortune, and yet at the end of it all we see him deemed as being someone who was in fact poor and worthless in the eyes of God. This is what greed can do to our lives! If we allow for our hearts to be consumed with accumulating material wealth, then what are we going to be willing to give up in order to do so? This man from the crowd was willing to take his brother to court basically. The rich fool was willing to neglect everything else in his life, God included, in order to become wealthy.
4. The question then for us is, *"What will we neglect for the same result?"* Would we not have to neglect our family at times? Would we not have to neglect our faith at times? Will we not have to ignore God's will for our lives if we want to grow mighty in material wealth? Certainly these are all sacrifices that would have to be made, and it should leave us surprised not one bit that the Scriptures continually warn against allowing ourselves to be consumed with the love of money, wealth, and greed. Instead, we are to be a people who use our blessings to be a blessing to others while always continuing to be rich towards God. **(1 Timothy 6:17-19)**

B. Our commitment to God's kingdom will lead Him to supply our needs.

1. The use of our blessings that Paul writes to Timothy about is exactly the type of behavior that Jesus would praise in our Text back in **Luke 12**. Notice following the parable that Jesus goes into some pretty familiar sounding teachings. *"And He said to His disciples, 'For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what*

you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.” (Luke 12:22,23)

It is at this point that Jesus goes on to talk about how His Father cares for the birds and nature. Why does Jesus take the time to talk about birds and plants? What does that have to do with us not worrying about our own needs?

2. His point can be clearly seen down in **v.31**, *“But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.”* Hold on a second...haven't we heard this before? Of course we have! This was a major section of Matthew's recording from the sermon on the mount in **Matthew 5-7**. No, this isn't Luke's recording of the sermon on the mount, so why is this recorded here? It shouldn't surprise us, but Jesus seems to have been one who would teach the same thing in different places. Why would he do such a thing? Obviously it must be because He thought it an important message, and certainly this teaching on material possess and seeking the kingdom first would fall under such important messages.
3. So what is Jesus's overall point in this section? His main learning point is for people to understand that their focus must be on the kingdom and not on the distractions of this world. This can be difficult for some to comprehend because after all...don't we have to eat, drink, wear clothes, and have shelter? Sure these are necessities of life, and Jesus is trying to tell us that if we will be focused on the kingdom then our Lord will make care of these necessities. If we will be strong kingdom servants then we will find greatness where it truly matters...in God. This is exactly what Jesus means when he tells His arguing disciples, *“If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” (Mark 9:34)* The greatness we desire should only be for the things of God, and if we want to be great in the kingdom then it begins by being a servant to others and practicing exactly what we saw a bit ago in **I Timothy 6:17-19**. Greatness is found in selflessness and serving others! This should be our motivation.
4. We must be a people who are only motivated by our love for God and others and a desire to be great for the kingdom's sake. If our cares and motivations are firmly founded in God and His will then we can have confidence that the Lord will provide for our needs. His people will always have what they need to continue to do His will in their lives. This should clearly be seen when disaster hits. When there is a natural disaster, who are the first be people to be picked up and put back on their feet? Disciples! Why? Because we help and provide for one another. This is simply a way that God fulfills His promise of adding all of these things to us when we first seek the kingdom of God. The foolish rich man failed to recognize this, and for that he paid an awful price.

In a world that is overrun by the pursuit of wealth and the disease of greed, we must be every more on guard against these weapons of Satan as he seeks to turn our hearts away from God and towards anything but. May this sad parable of this rich fool...his ignorance of God, his faith in a not promised future, and his love for riches stand as a warning for us to avoid the same mistakes and ultimately the same faith. May we hope and confidence only ever been firmly planted in the Lord, and may our pursuit of greatest in His kingdom lead to our hope with Him for eternity. May He strengthen each of us to follow these strong teachings of His Son to our benefit and reward.