

Lesson 3: The Rich Fool

Reference: **Please Read:** Luke 12:13-21

Theme: Be on your Guard against All Kinds of Greed – Life is more than Material Things

Context: A dispute Arose Between Brothers concerning their Father's Estate

Introduction:

Money can be such a contentious topic today as it was in Jesus' day. For instance, it is one of the main reasons for divorce and disharmony within the home in our nation.

- **Please Read: 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19**
- Money is not evil, it's the love of it- we're called to love God first and foremost
- Money is a tool, a means to an end, but not our ultimate goal in life

1 Corinthians 7:30-31

"...those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away."

- So it's not surprising that Jesus had a lot to say about the right handling of money
- God does not mind His children being rich, He just does not want us to be covetous
- Many promises concerning prosperity, God wants us blessed to be a blessing- **Acts 20:35**

All throughout the Bible, God's Covenant people who were walking in fellowship with Him had a super abundance, full supply, well off, had all their needs met- that is my definition of rich.

Greed, a Snare for the Soul

Notice the strong warning Jesus made about greed or covetousness- the two words are interchangeable. I love the statement Jesus made, "*a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.*"

- The world system pushes the lie, that if we just have more stuff, we'll be happier
- The more stuff people get a hold of, the emptier they feel and life becomes meaningless
- A vain/futile pursuit for fulfillment outside of Jesus- **Psalms 127:1; Ecclesiastes 2; 2 Peter 2:22**

Question: "Have you ever struggled with materialism, in what area of your life?"

Romans 7:7-8

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.

- The problem with the lust of greed is that it does not know when to stop
 - o **Proverbs 23:1-8; 27:20**
- Like the compulsive gambler that is never satisfied, and can never just walk away

Ecclesiastes 5:10, "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless."

- The god of money and materialism is an idol that we all have to deal with in this life
 - o Comes down to sinful human nature which is inherently selfish
 - o **Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5-6.**
- Vocational ministers have to be especially on guard against the temptation of greed
 - o **Luke 16:14-15; John 12:6; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 1 Timothy 3:3; 1 Peter 5:2-3**

Matthew 6:24

"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."

The other problem with greed that it is the obsessive preoccupation of physical things- not just money. The idol of beauty, fame, power or any other compulsive pursuit outside of our God.

Mark 4:19 AMP

Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless.

- **Question:** "So how is the world system so detrimental to our faith?"
- The, "worries of this life," "deceitfulness of wealth" and "the desires for other things"
- They choke out the things of God in our lives, become weights and sins- **Hebrews 12:1**
 - o In verse 2, "*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith*"

Why does Jesus call wealth "deceitful" I wonder, perhaps because of the distractions it can cause to solicit and capture our devotion and love away from God who is jealous for us.

- o **Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 32:21; 2 Corinthians 11:2**
- To love and be devoted to the things of this world is sin- **James 4:1-10; 1 John 2:15-17**

God understands that we have physical needs and He is more than able to meet our daily needs- to have an abundance. Let's not put them first or worry about them, rather seek first His Kingdom and righteousness and all these others things will be added as well- **Mt. 6:25-34**.

Nothing Satisfies Like Jesus

God made mankind as spirit beings, and without God there is this aching void in our hearts that is reserved only for Him to fill. No amount of money, sex, drugs, fame or anything else can fill it or provide an escape from the ever pressing and urgent reality that we need Jesus.

1 Peter 1:18-19

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

- The more people lust for the things of this life, the more unsatisfied and empty they are
- The world provides hollow and deceptive philosophies to answers life's deep questions
- The plain truth is that the reality is found in Jesus alone- **Col. 2:8-23; Galatians 4:8-10**

John 17:3, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

Psalms 16:11

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Being Rich toward God

Finally, getting back to the rich man in the parable, the problem with this guy is that he wanted to hoard his wealth for his own personal consumption- **Proverbs 3:9-10**.

- Had a false perception about the future; assumed nothing would happen to him/stash
 - o **Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 12:32-34**
- Nor did he give thanks or credit to God for the abundant prosperity he received
- The problem often times with abundance, people forget about God and His Kingdom
 - o **Job 8:8-15; Psalms 9:17**

Proverbs 30:7-9, "Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God."

Question: "What is the balance between being financially prosperous and Seeking God first?"