

MEET YOURSELF IN LUKE'S PARABLES

Part 5: The Parable of the Rich Fool Lessons on Covetousness (Luke 12:13-34)

INTRO: Chart... Examining the unique parables in Luke (19 total, 18 between 9:51-19:27). Jesus and his followers are in final few months of public ministry as He journeys to Jerusalem and the cross. Opposition and hatred by the religious leaders at Jesus is growing.

SETTING for Parable: 12:1-3 issues warning about hypocrisy; 12:4-7 challenging all to fear God; 12:8-12 instructing them to confess Him. In the midst of important teachings some clueless bystander interrupts Jesus with a request to solve a family dispute over money and inheritance. Read vv.13-21...

MAIN TRUTH: Avoid covetousness and laying up treasure for yourself, instead be generous and get rich toward God. 16/38 parables on possessions!

Greed is no laughing matter. Paul exhorts believers on Col. 3:5 to “Put to death.” Greed is a form of idolatry. Yet, it is rarely viewed among the horrific sins. Jesus never warned as dramatically against adultery, murder, drunkenness as He does here against materialism and covetousness. Eve coveted being like God and ate the forbidden fruit. Lot’s wife coveted Sodom and died on the spot. David coveted his neighbor’s wife and plunged himself, his family, and his nation into trouble. The last of the 10 Comm. is, “Thou shall not covet.”

I. THE PROBLEM (12:13-15).

- A. *COVETOUSNESS* (v. 13) – Someone in crowd interrupts His teaching with a request (demand) to side with him in a family dispute over inheritance. As the younger brother, Jewish law gave him one-third of estate. He wanted his part but older brother had somehow kept estate intact.
- B. *CAUTION* (v. 14) – Jesus would not be drawn into such a role. His mission was to bring people to God not get property for people. Too many want Jesus to solve their problems but not change their hearts. Jesus knew his request was “symptom” of a deeper problem – greed.
- C. *CORE* (v. 15) – Real issue is addressed and sets up parable to come. Addressing crowd, Jesus issues strong warning. . . His warning forces us to face what life is all about. Who or what is the source of our life? God or things? Covetousness is as much about our attitude toward stuff as it is the amount. Greed comes in all kinds of forms (money, power, control, etc.). People (even Christians) with a materialistic mindset think success is measured by what you possess.

II. THE PARABLE (12:16-21)

- A. *FINE MAN* – honest, hard-working farmer, good thinker and planner, man of action, decisive. His affluence is not criticized, nor how he acquired it all, nor the increase of it.

B. *A FOOLISH MAN* because of what he forgot:

1. *He forgot others.* All the personal pronouns tell us he only thought of himself and his pleasure. He only wanted more so could indulge himself more.
2. *He forgot the spiritual.* He thought only of the material and physical. Materialism gripped his life. He pleased his body but starved his soul.
3. *He forgot the eternal.* He cared more for the immediate than the permanent. He lived for this life only.
4. *He forgot about God.* God is never even mentioned. It never entered his mind that God was source of all he had. He needed a bigger place to store his crops but he had no place for God (1 Tim. 6:10; Lk. 8:14).

C. *APPLICATION* (v. 21) – So it is with all who are greedy and not generous. Investment in eternity is more important than enjoyment in time. He was not rich toward God. True riches (success) not found in what you have but *Whom* you have. God called him and all like him a “Fool!” (v. 20). He learned what all learn eventually – this life is a loan from God (“demand”). At any time, He can call in the loan.

III. THE PREVENTION (12:22-34).

Christ follows the parable with a sermon on worry. Why? Because worry over things is one of the most common sins. We get ulcers not so much from what we eat as from what eats us. There is an alternative to greed. Jesus again turns to teach his disciples why they should not worry and be afraid. In so doing, He teaches them and us how to get a grip on greed: Don’t worry. Trust God.

- A. (vv. 22-24) Worry is *Foolish* – It is both unreasonable and unnatural for a Cn. to worry. If God meets needs of birds, He will surely care for His own children.
- B. (vv. 25-28) Worry is *Futile* – It is worthless. It is more likely to shorten life. Worry does no good. If God takes care of lilies and grass, He will take care of His own.
- C. (vv. 29-32) Worry is *Faithless* – It is unspiritual to worry. Trust heavenly Father to meet your needs. God has already given you true riches (His kingdom). Will He not do what is less? Which is harder – to save you or sustain you?
- D. (vv. 33-34) *Practice generosity.* Giving combats greed. Where you put your money is where your heart is. How much did the fool leave behind? All! Had he lived for God, he could’ve sent it ahead.

MAIN TRUTH: Avoid covetousness and laying up treasure for yourself, instead be generous and get rich toward God.

CONC: Let’s read v. 15 together...