



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 62 "The Rich Fool - Guarding Against Coveting"

By Pastor Jody May

Luke 12:13-21 ESV

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care, and **be on your guard against all covetousness**, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." ' ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

When last we were in the book of Luke, we were concluding a very serious discourse on how to avoid the unforgiveable sin of the blasphemy of the HS (v. 10), the hardening of one's heart against the Lord Jesus. It had come at the conclusion when He was instructing his disciples on how to avoid the Leaven of the Pharisees, that leads to Hypocrisy. This hypocrisy the Pharisees had perfected was how they lived out a false religion; a way of living by laws made to flaunt one's perceived superiority. This sense of superiority had led to the hardening of the Pharisees heart against Jesus. Their hypocrisy of pretending to be what they weren't, not acknowledging their need for Jesus, lead them to do the one thing that was unforgiveable, blasphemy against the Spirit.

This next section in the book of Luke Jesus seeks to widen this gap between His disciples and any desire to be like a Pharisee. He had given the stern warning, why they should fear, and now He was going to address a worldly fear they had in their hearts. Things that he knew that drove people to follow the Pharisees and accept their leadership and adopt their false religious practices. In the middle of this next section there stands out the next point that Jesus wants to make clear to



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everyone, not just His disciples, but those few people, out of the immense crowds that were following Him, why they should desire taking on the yoke of Jesus instead of the Pharisees.

Luke 12:32 ESV

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

This is new! The people have been living under the impression that according to Judaism that the kingdom was unattainable, or iffy at most, but perhaps if you lived a good enough life you may get into the afterlife. But this true and new message of the Gospel is that **it was the Father's good pleasure, His decision to give** before you ever tried picking up that yoke/religion of works. This concept of God's Kingdom given at His pleasure was different than what the Pharisees believed. It was not that God would just grace you with the entrance into eternal life after death but that the **blessings of God were for you now!**

That same promise is for you HCC! **Acknowledging Jesus** in all of your life in 2020 is to live in and **accept that Good Pleasure of the Father**. To believe in His steadfast love, your continual forgiveness, your ongoing freedom from spiritual death, your acceptance into His family and your eternal security. **You see when you realize all of that, eternal life is a new perspective that you live with now!** **Having Eternal Life NOW** makes you understand that the world and all it can offer just doesn't hold weight with you anymore; eternal life begins not when you die but upon your gift of faith!

Jesus wanted them to know that then and He wants you to know that now!

But in order to receive the full measure of this Kingdom Jesus needs to **open up our tight grip** on that which we don't want to give up, **the world and the possessions it can give us**, those things that tell us we are doing better than everyone else. **PROBLEM** - We can't be loyal to the obtaining the things of this world if we truly desire the things of God's Kingdom. So, Jesus tackles that drive, that feeling, that aptitude, to latch on that which we think brings happiness – **COVETOUSNESS.**



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Simple definition – **GREED**. You know our nations laws were developed they say from the ten commandments. We have laws against murder, theft, and until this century adultery but you know what we don't have laws against? **Coveting, because Greed is what drive the Free Market!** The liberty of "the pursuit of happiness" is pursued by people with flawed hearts so coveting is a part of the American Dream and this is why it is such a dangerous sin for all of here today. If you were born in America, you were born with the notion that it is a good thing to always desire more.

Greed is what takes your eyes of the Kingdom and a better life now and makes us settle instead for the cheap imitation of the world can give us.

For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is **covetous** (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. – **Eph. 5:5**

Coveting **insulates** you from experiencing the '**Good Pleasure**' of the Father when He wants you to have the Kingdom now!

Jesus, being the opportunist that He is, teaches us about the emptiness that coveting can bring when it was brought up in as a surprise talking point.

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?"

Jesus' last words before this was that the Spirit would give you the words when needed: "Hey Jesus, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." Seriously, this is how this guy interpreted this? In those days, in the time of the New Temple, Rabbis could be asked to judge disputes over inheritances perhaps due to the nature of was the oldest sibling worthy of it according to Jewish laws and customs. This guy, after all that Jesus had been teaching about honoring God, to stay away from the teaching of the Pharisees, completing miracles, **what was on his mind was money**. He, unlike others, doesn't even approach with humbleness because he probably knows it's not the time to do it, but demonstrates what was



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important to the people of that day. **Your success was determined by how much you had.** It kind of reminds me of how we are with God, we can pray like crazy for our days but we will live out our days like God is not in control of anything and that it all depends upon how we can obtain money.

Of course, Jesus is never anyone's do-boy, so He asks who made Him the arbitrator over His estate? It was the assumption that Jesus had to do it for it was what Rabbis did? Seriously, the guy didn't even ask, he commanded.

That brings us to three things we need to learn about this aptitude for coveting we all have today. For it makes us all short with our God, this aptitude for disdaining Him, this thought where we can come to Him, demand in His name that He settle our greedy desires:

1. Coveting is not assuaged by what you desire.

¹⁵ And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

You may think bad about this guy. But in reality, is he really different than us? Right now we are sitting here, in a climate controlled comfortable room, the HS is at work helping us see Jesus and many of us right now are worried about our financial situations, in our hearts we too are saying, "Rabbi, that's nice, can you please fix my financial situation?" That's a normal human condition, but in that day imagine the pressure of having more, because unlike today not everyone was privy to education, medical care, and food. More money literally meant more life span. **(The pharisees never would lift a finger to help us, will you Jesus?)**

For us more money means we get to determine what we want to do with our life spans. To spend too much effort in the pursuit of money for either cause is sin.

Mat. 6:26 *"Look at the birds of the air: they neither so nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"*



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We are told that God actually takes care of our daily needs and spending too much effort trying to get your daily wants is in opposition to being ok with what God gives you.

When does the battle with Coveting really ramp up in our lives?

Thinking about it this week, I thought about when coveting really takes off in our lives, in light of being Americanized. **It is when we get the first taste of getting what we wanted...**

- I get my first real job and now I can afford a better car.
- I got my first home and now I need to fill it up.
- I finally got that new electronic so now I need that next piece.
- I got married and now there is a dual or better income.
- I had my first child and of course they need a sibling.

Any time you get a taste of something you always wanted it always makes you crave more.

I know that when I was single there were certain things I wanted and when I got them, I was ok. **But when I got married holy cow that trajectory went off the chart.** You see, it's not necessarily one spouse wanted more than the other but that when the 2 come together there are two wants that need to be satiated and not one. It takes time for all that to come together, usually, on average it takes couples well into their 40s to finally settle down and start living within their means again because hopefully they finally get on the same page again. **The quicker the two become on flesh and function like that the sooner the checkbook recovers.**

The reality is that getting what you Coveted is actually **like eating Chinese food**, it will make you hungry thirty minutes later... Because what you taught yourself is that you can achieve what you desire **BUT** what you're achieving never satisfies, which means you must busy yourself constantly with the obtaining of more things. In the **Psychological perspective** you have **classically trained your behaviors** by your own hand to enslave yourself to the thought that 'mo' money means 'mo' happiness.... There is only one way to assuage our spiritual and emotional hunger.



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Christ satiates our appetites.

- Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." – **John 6:35 ESV**
- For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things. **Psalm 107:9 ESV**
- The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever! – **Psalm 22:26 ESV**

Yes, the Lord can fill you, but to help that dietary switch there is something you can do...

Fast and rest to reset your soul's desire (stomach).

Because Christ is meant to satiate our desires there is a way to develop a hunger for Him instead of cheap fillers. FAST, not just food but actually put yourself on a Greed free diet. Make 2020 the year where you actually build a budget for ministry, outside of an offering, and use that as a way of acknowledging Christ. Fasting from feeding your greed can reset your appetite which just like your physical appetite will never go away. And you will discover HCC that when you have built an appetite for the things of God that the Father will always continue to feed you the things your heart needs, for as Jesus said, it is **His good pleasure to do so!**

2. Coveting produces work that is meaningless.

¹⁶ And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸ And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

In Jesus parable He shows the destructive sin of Coveting at work. This man was not like those immediately surrounding Jesus, this guy was **RICH** already! **The barns that he already had were already full.** His crisis was that he had nowhere



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to store all the extra grain. This man is the epitome of success. As a matter of fact, he didn't expect to have such a yield which means his formula for crop production based on seed, rainfall, and workers had nothing to do with his harvest, **this was a blessing from God! The issue should be not how do I store the extra that has been accumulated thinking it was for him, but rather how do I give that extra away!?** I think now Jesus is showing the Pharisees that their good fortune was not because of their holy behavior but that **their holiness should have been displayed by how they gave their extra away.**

In the parable the rich man, instead of employing more people or enriching the community's life, he begins to become destructive. He tears down what was perfectly fine, **it is a violent grab at what he thinks he needs.** It is a way to lock up and keep others from taking and it turned into a power grab from those he could have blessed. The Greed in this man's heart was to begin a work that was pointless except for his own heart, misinterpreting the workings of the Lord, setting him in a direction he should have never gone. His Greed had led him to a work that was meaningless.

PROBLEM - Perhaps that could be where you have found yourself this morning? The Greed that you are struggling with has you busy all the time absorbed in how you increase your possessions or at least keep what you have. Paul, a rescued Pharisee, was delivered from a life of meaningless. His rescue came in the way that he modeled Christ in sacrificing himself for others. Paul, while in Ephesus, tells those in the church that loved him, that knew he would not come back, how life was not about accumulating but was all about giving away.

In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' – **Acts 20:35 ESV**

This morning, along with fasting from those things we are greedy over, maybe we take what we already have and we begin to give it away.

Be less concerned about keeping what you have gained and worry more about giving it away into Kingdom play.



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HCC nor Goodwill doesn't need the stuff you don't want but perhaps the things you have are so that you could bless someone that needs them? Maybe instead of putting it on FB marketplace or Ebay you could bless someone instead and tell them Jesus has supplied this for me and now I am giving it to you. I am not saying you have to go home and empty out your houses of all your earthly possessions but what I am asking you is to view them in the light of the Kingdom, that they aren't yours to hoard, but that they are God's blessings to share.

3. Coveting produces a dead-end wealth.

¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

In the end we see what really drives the Rich man. It is not the security of having an overabundance of food, he wasn't a doomsday prepper. It wasn't the fact that he was going to control the market's price with his affluent harvest. His meaningless work was all based on the desire to put his feet up, sit back, and take stock on his good fortune so he could enjoy the life of an epicurean, eat, drink, and be merry – that is the epitome of one that is all wrapped up in the fleshly desires of life. But for that man it would never be experienced, for worldly gain never have a long shelf life. All the work, labor and toil we put out in our lives, if it is built on coveting and greed will always leave us short in this life and the next.

And see v.21 states the outcome for those not rich towards God but you have already heard the Gospel, don't you remember what God wants for you?

Luke 12:32 ESV

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

So, here's the truth for you this morning if you are a follower of Christ.

Christ's work brings eternal wealth.



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But the offer of Jesus for those back then and for us now is a fulfilling, meaningful, and eternal life.

“²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” – **Luke 9:24-25 ESV**

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. – **John 10:28 ESV**

This morning I hope that the Spirit has shown you where you have **succumbed** a little too much to the **sin of covetousness** and that we all have been **convicted just on how much we think we need**. I also pray that the Spirit has shown you just how **rich we are to have Christ**, that He **makes us full**, and that He **gives everlasting meaning to our lives**.

PRAY

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, that finds pleasure, right now, in delivering us the blessings of His Kingdom.

Go in the name of the Son, that satiates our desires and delivers us the Kingdom through His work.

Go in the name and the power of the HS, that helps us see what we desire more than Christ, that opens our eyes to the Kingdom, and urges us to share what we already have.