

One thing before my sermon...

Have you noticed that since we hired Pastor Nathan – I don't know how to say it other than – there's a lot more food around?

Seems like they're constantly:

- Feeding people
- Bringing food to people

I told the elders we're going to have to change the name of our church to Calorie Chapel.

I wanted to let you know that at our last elder meeting Jim, Andrew, and I voted to give them an extra \$300 per month stipend for food. Hopefully that will be enough, but we'll see 😊.

Let's pray.

The title of this morning's sermon is, *"Learning from a Rich Fool."*

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's Gospel verse-by-verse. Last week we started The Parable of the Rich Fool, and this morning we'll finish it.

Look w/ me at **verse 16** to get the context...

Luke 12:16 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?'"

His harvest was so great he ran out of room. As a farmer, his crops are basically money, so it's like he has more money than he knows what to do w/ it.

He asks a good question, and there are many good answers...such as...

"Since God gave me such a great crop, I'll give back to Him:

- I'll give to the temple or the synagogue
- I'll give to the poor
- I'll give to widows or orphans

But he didn't come up w/ any good answers. Look at **verse 18**...

Luke 12:18 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. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."'

The Rich Man feels good about himself, but look what God thinks...

Luke 12:20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’

Although God said the man is a fool, he actually looks very smart:

- He was rich and able to accumulate all this wealth.
- He was a wise farmer and successful business man.

Last week we talked about how we can look wise in the world’s eyes, but like fools to God, and this man is a great example.

Since we want to make sure we look good in God’s eyes – versus the world’s eyes – we’re going to talk about why God said this man was a fool so we can learn from him.

First question for you...

In verses 17, 18, and 19 what words did the Rich Fool repeat?

In three verses he said “**I**” 6 times and “**my**” 5 times revealing how selfish he was...and this brings us to Lesson 1...

THE RICH MAN WAS A FOOL BECAUSE HE DIDN’T (LESSON 1) GIVE.

Just to be clear, there’s nothing wrong with saving, investing, or preparing for the future. There are plenty of verses in Scripture that applaud doing so. Here are just a few:

- **Pro 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children**
- In Proverbs, ants are set down as examples b/c of the way they save:
 - **Pro 6:8 [Ants prepare] bread in summer and gather food in harvest.**
 - **Pro 30:25 Ants are a people not strong, yet they [store up] their food in the summer;**

So if the Rich Man’s problem wasn’t saving and preparing for the future, what was it?

It was failing to think about anyone else:

- It was selfishness.
- Everything was about him.

You’d expect him to say something about:

- His wife
- His kids
- His employees – perhaps giving them a bonus
- His friends
- His neighbors

But there’s no mention of anyone else.

Let me illustrate this man's selfishness by providing a simple economics lesson from the OT...

When Samaria – the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel – was besieged by Syria, things got so bad, listen to this...

2 Kin 6:25 There was a great famine in Samaria, as [Syria] besieged it, until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and the fourth part of a quart of dove's dung for five shekels of silver.

This is crazy:

- You'd have to PAY ME 80 pieces of silver to take a donkey's head off your hands.
- Not even sure the price you'd have to pay me to collect dove's dung.

They ran out of food, and it's a simple issue of supply and demand: no supply and high demand, so the price skyrocketed.

God was going to provide the city w/ a bunch of food, so listen to this...

2 Kin 7:1 Elisha said, "Hear the word of the Lord: thus says the Lord, Tomorrow about this time [six quarts] of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and [twelve quarts] of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria."

When God provided all this food, supply skyrocketed and prices plummeted.

The way this relates to the Rich Fool is he wanted to avoid this situation!

- He knew if he flooded the market w/ his crop, there'd be high supply, low demand, and prices would plummet.
- So he said he'd build all these barns to store the crops. Then he'd control the supply and keep prices high.

It was selfish!

What's the application for us?

This parable should cause us to look at our wealth and consider how we're using it to serve others:

- Are we generous?
- Are we giving?
- Do we use what God has blessed us with to bless others?

Next, let me get you to notice a sad contrast in these verses:

- In **verse 19** the Rich Fool said he had **"goods laid up for MANY YEARS."**
- In **verse 20** God said, **"THIS NIGHT your soul is required of you."**

He thought he had **many years** left, but he didn't have **many** months or weeks or even days left. He had hours.

And this brings us to Lesson 2...

THE RICH MAN WAS A FOOL BECAUSE HE DIDN'T (LESSON II) PLAN FOR ETERNITY.

Many people's lives in Scripture contain ironies. For example:

- Abraham was the father of faith, but at times he lacked faith and was fearful...like when he told his wife to say she was his sister b/c he was afraid of getting killed...twice.
- Samson was the strongest man to ever live, but he was weak w/ Delilah.
- Solomon was the wisest man to ever live, but he was foolish later in life.

The Rich Man's life is a big irony too...

He thinks he's a great long-term planner, but he was actually a terrible planner:

- He was completely unprepared for the future.
- He had an earthly, temporal view that ignored the spiritual and eternal.

He got life and death wrong.

Here's what I mean...

- In **verse 15** Jesus said, "**One's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**" But he thought life does consist in the abundance of his possessions. So he got life wrong.
- He also thought his death was very far away, so he got death wrong too.

If you write in your bible, circle the words **This night your soul will be required of you** and write, "Jam 1:9-11," which says...

Jam 1:9 Let the [rich] boast 10 in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also WILL THE RICH MAN FADE AWAY IN THE MIDST OF HIS PURSUITS.

This is exactly what happened w/ the Rich Fool! He's probably the best picture of this in Scripture!

How many people have thought they had years – or even decades – ahead of them only to receive the news of a disease. And these are the fortunate people, b/c they learn their lives are coming to an end so they can make preparations for eternity.

What about unbelievers whose lives come to an end unexpectedly? Perhaps an accident or dying in their sleep? They have no time to prepare for eternity!

If you ask most people how they want to go, they'll say, "Quietly in my sleep when I'm old."

- But this is only a good way to go if you know the Lord.
- If you don't know the Lord, it's a terrible way to go, b/c you don't have time to repent.

For people NOT living for the Lord, the best thing for them is to get news that they don't have much time left so they might wake them from their spiritual slumber.

This parable should cause us to ask:

- Are we thinking about eternity?
- Are we living in light of it?
- Do we act as though our soul could be required of us tonight?

And speaking of our souls, this brings us to Lesson 3...

THE RICH MAN WAS A FOOL BECAUSE HE DIDN'T (LESSON III) KNOW TO WHOM HIS SOUL BELONGED.

Notice an important contrast in these verses...

In **verse 19** the Rich Man said, **“I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.’”**

It's clear he thought his soul belonged to him!

If I said, “What did the Rich Fool lose?” you could say all his wealth and possessions. That's true, but he lost something way more important, and that's his soul...

In **verse 20** God said, **‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you,’**

He was going to lose his soul. It was going to be taken, b/c it didn't belong to him. It belonged to God.

Matt 16:26 **What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?**

Hopefully nobody has an answer for this other than...nothing! There's nothing we'd trade for our souls.

The Rich Man is a great picture of this verse too:

- He seemed to gain the whole world, but lose his soul.
- There was no amount of wealth or possessions that was worth the tradeoff he made.

This parable should also cause us to ask:

- Are we aware we belong completely to God, including our souls?
- Do we recognize we're going to be called to account for what we've done w/ the lives God's given us?

Next, look back at **verse 20** one more time...

God said to him, “The things you have prepared, whose will they be?”

In other words, he’s going to leave all this behind for someone else.

It reminds me of Solomon’s words...

Ecc 2:18 I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me,

This echoes something we’ve discussed many times over the last few months...

We can’t take anything w/ us!

- When we were in **1 Tim 6** in **verse 7** Paul said **we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.**
- When we were in **Ecc 5** in **verse 15** Solomon said **as he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand.**

So you can’t take anything w/ you into the next life...but what if I told you Scripture also makes it sound like you can!

Listen to this...

Matt 6:19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 BUT LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

This sounds like we can take stuff w/ us!

So which is it? We can or we can’t?

Here’s the balance...

We can’t take anything w/ us...but we can send it ahead!

The Rich man didn’t do this, which reveals another reason he was a fool...

THE RICH MAN WAS A FOOL BECAUSE HE DIDN’T (LESSON IV) SEND ANYTHING AHEAD.

One of the other ironies of his life is that he was so rich in this life, but so poor in the next.

Notice the parallelism between what Jesus said we should do and what the Rich Fool did do:

- In **Matt 6:20** Jesus said **LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN** where **neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.**
- In **Luke 12:21** Jesus said the Rich Man [**laid up**] **treasure for himself.**”

He did the OPPOSITE of what Jesus said to do!

Listen to what James says to the rich...

Jam 5:1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. **2** Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. **3** Your gold and silver have corroded, (Exactly what Jesus said would earthly wealth: **destroyed by moth and rust!**) **and their corrosion will be evidence against you** (and this is why...). **You have LAID UP TREASURE [for the day of judgment].**

They laid up treasure for themselves so **moth [and] rust [destroyed it]** versus sending it ahead!

We have two choices w/ all our wealth...

First, we can be like the Rich Fool and keep it all for ourselves. If we take this approach:

- We'll be separated from it when we die.
- We'll enter eternity destitute like the Rich Fool

The other choice w/ our wealth is sending it ahead.

How do we do that?

We use it for God's kingdom.

We're good stewards!

The best stewards in this life have much waiting for them in the next life.

Listen to this story...

A rich man died and went to heaven. Abraham greeted him and said, "Welcome to heaven. Let me show you where you'll be staying."

As they walked, the rich man saw beautiful mansions stretching out in every direction. They were constructed of gold and silver and precious gems. As they passed one mansion, the rich man said, "Who gets to stay here?"

Abraham replied, "That's for your groundskeeper. He was a godly man who loved Jesus, and served Him all his life. This is his reward."

They continued past other mansions, until they reached an extremely large one. The rich man asked Abraham, "Is this one mine?"

Abraham said, “No, this one belongs to your maid. On the little bit of money you paid her, she raised six children and gave to her church.”

They continued to walk until they came to a different section of homes that weren’t as nice. As they walked up a small hill, they stopped in front of a shack made of tar paper and used sheet metal. The front door was cut out of an old refrigerator box. It was held together with bailing wire, twine, and duct tape. After pausing for a moment, the rich man asked, “Who lives here?”

Abraham responded, “Why, this is yours!”

The rich man couldn’t believe it. He said, “There must be some mistake!”

Abraham said, “No, there’s been no mistake. We did the best we could with what you sent ahead!

Let me say it like this:

- What we lay up for ourselves on this side of heaven is what we lose for eternity, b/c we chose to enjoy in this life.
- What we use on this side of heaven for God’s kingdom is what we keep for eternity, b/c we’re sending it ahead.

We should ask ourselves:

- Am I being a good steward of what God’s given me?
- Am I sending anything ahead?

In last week’s sermon I asked you if the Rich Fool looked foolish. Now I’d like to ask you another question...

Does he look evil?

From a worldly perspective, I would say, “No.”

- There’s no record of him lying, cheating, or stealing.
- He seemed to be a diligent, hardworking man who obtained his wealth in an honest, moral way.

Yet God still called him a fool, and although it doesn’t say he went to hell, it’s implied.

His judgment looks surprisingly strong for a man who don’t look that bad...or some might even say looked good!

So what was so bad about him?

The answer is at the end of **verse 21...**

Luke 12:21b And is not rich toward God.”

And this brings us to our last lesson...

THE RICH MAN WAS A FOOL BECAUSE HE DIDN'T (LESSON V) THINK ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

The Rich Fool reminds me of the third servant in The Parable of the Talents. There's no record of him doing anything really bad...but there's also no record of him doing anything...at all...at least not for God. So God said he was wicked and lazy.

The Rich Fool is different in that he wasn't lazy – he was actually very hard working – but he's similar in that he also didn't do anything for God.

What does it mean that he wasn't **rich toward God**?

At first I thought it meant that he didn't do anything for God – and that's true – but it means he had no relationship w/ God.

Listen to the way it's translated in other Bibles:

- **Amplified - Is not rich [in his relationship] toward God.”**
- **NLT - Not have a rich relationship with God.”**
- **GWT - Not rich in his relationship with God.”**

If the world looked at this man they'd see a tragedy, but it would be the wrong tragedy...

They would say...

“It's too bad he died just when he had everything going for him. What a tragedy his life came to an end right after getting all this wealth. It's so sad that he left all this behind.”

But that's not the tragedy.

The tragedy is that:

- He was about to enter a Christ-less eternity
- He lived w/o God through his earthly life and he would live w/o God through his entire eternal life.

Consider this...

He never thought about God while he lived. There was nothing about God – no mention of Him – until **verse 20** when God said, “Fool.”

- Can you imagine never thinking about God?
- Then your first thought of Him is when He calls you a fool and tells you your life is going to end?

God blessed him w/ so much:

- His wisdom

- His strength
- His wealth
- His success
- His business
- His health

But he never thought about the God who gave all this to him!

There are people living their lives and they give no thought to God despite all He's given them:

- Their relationships
- Their jobs
- Their food
- Their wealth
- Their homes
- Their possessions
- Their health...every breath they take
- Creation itself is one of God's blessings and they get to enjoy it:
 - **Matt 5:45 He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**
 - The Rich Man experienced much of God's sunlight and rain on his fields that made him rich

But they give no thought to God.

This is a parable, which means I can't say for sure that this is exactly what it's going to be like for people, but it definitely occurred to me that it could be very CLOSE to this...

People enjoy God's blessings and grace, but...

- They don't thank Him
- They don't worship Him
- They have no interest in Him

The first time they'll think of Him is when they stand before Him and hear something terrible like the Rich Fool did. Maybe it will be...

Matt 25:30 Cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Yes, this is a parable, but it's still making important points, and one of the most important is that only foolish people don't think about God in this life.

As we come to the end of this parable, let me get you to reflect on something...

It reveals some important things riches could NOT do...

1. They couldn't keep the Rich Fool alive when the time came for him to die.

2. They couldn't buy back the opportunities he missed while he was selfish and thinking only about himself
3. They couldn't make him rich toward God after ignoring Him throughout his life.

And the other thing riches couldn't do was save his soul.

Consider the irony...

In **verse 19** he told his soul, **“Relax, eat, drink, be merry”** but:

- This was the last thing his soul was going to experience.
- He was a selfish man who went to hell.

But this is what else I'd say...

We're all selfish!

- He thought only about this life, but...who else often thinks only about this life?
- He didn't plan for eternity, but often we don't plan for eternity
- He didn't send anything ahead, but often we don't send anything ahead
- He didn't think about God, but often we don't think about God

At this point you might expect me to say...

“So stop being selfish...

- Think about the next life...
- Plan for eternity...
- Send stuff ahead...
- Think about God.

But that's not the Gospel, b/c:

- We'll never be completely free from our selfishness
- We'll never perfectly plan for eternity or send everything ahead
- There won't be a day that we always think about God

The Gospel is that:

- If we recognize these truths about ourselves...
- Confess our sin...
- Turn to Christ...

He saves us!

Our sin leaves us poor as the Rich Man, but here's the Good News...

Luke 4:18 [Jesus said], “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

If we think we're spiritually rich, which is to say:

- We're proud
- We're self-righteous
- We think we're good

Then Jesus didn't come for us.

But if we recognize our spiritual poverty, then Jesus offers us His spiritual riches...

Eph 1:7 In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE,

If we want to be **rich toward God**, we repent of our sins and put our faith in Christ.

Let's pray.