

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

Luke 12:13-21

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

The character of a man is often indicated by the thoughts he has while attending preaching. Here a man interrupts Jesus with an impertinent question that has nothing whatever to do with the subject that Jesus is speaking about. Therefore Jesus' answer is severe. There were courts for this sort of dispute. Humanly speaking, Jesus had no jurisdiction over this civil matter. So He refused to hear the complaint. But Jesus does address the motive of the question [15] - **covetousness**.

What is covetousness?

It is not simply a desire for property, which can be altogether legitimate. It is the desire for money and things simply for the sake of having it, not for necessary goals, such as: Old age, children's education, etc. Don't let the acquisition of wealth become the priority of life.

A man's life {worth} is not measured by the things he has, but by his character. What he is, not what he has.

So we have the parable of the foolish rich man. A man already so rich he has no place to store his large crops. But his only thought is to keep the proceeds for himself [17, 18]. So he needs bigger barns. He wants to enjoy what he has [19],

But he forgot God [20]!

Jesus says, "So...." [21] i.e., such a great fool is this man.

The interpretation of the parable lies in the answer to the question;
"Wherein did this man's folly consist?"

LESSONS:

1. The man ignored God (17, 18, 21). No praise to God. Notice and mark the personal pronouns [17-19]. No doubt the man worked his fields, plowed them, and worked hard. But apart from God's blessing he would not have had a crop. It takes rain and sunshine. But he was a "self-made" man. Many people never thank God for their success in business, they never pray about their business, or even consider God in their business dealings..

Socialism is a cry against the abuses of wealth. And is just as bad.
Socialism says "What is yours is mine, and I will take it by force of law."

The Christian says, "What is mine is God's; and I will use it under His direction, for the good of others. That is stewardship.

2. The man's folly is seen in that the man never thought of other ways to dispose of his goods. He might have helped others but he only thought of himself.

Augustine: "Thou hast barns, the bosoms of the needy, the houses of widows, the mouths of orphans and infants."

3. His folly is seen in that he thought material goods were food for his soul (19). Food will keep your body alive, but it is not food for the soul.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God."

4. His folly is finally seen in that he ignored the fact that his goods were not to be his forever. "This night....! [20]

Spanish proverb: "There are no pockets in a shroud."

A millionaire died and someone asked how much did he leave?
The reply, "All that he had."

Whose shall these things be?

To store up goods to be consumed by the courts or squandered by prodigal children.

His goods belonged to God, and could have been used for God.
He would have still been a rich man, but not a rich fool.

The moral of the story is verse 21.

So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

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August 3, 2014