



THE MAN GOD CALLED A FOOL
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Good morning. Today, we want to call your attention to a passage of scripture in Luke 12 and we're going to look at verse 13 through verse 21. The Bible said Jesus went with His disciples through the land of Perea, and it was on the east side of Jordan. It was a part of the country of Israel that He had never been to before, but the people in that area were familiar with Him. They had not seen Him, but they had received the message of the 70 disciples that had been sent out by Jesus throughout the country. And so, wherever He went, there was always a multitude of people who was anxious to see Him and to hear Him preach.

Picking up the reading in verse 13, the Bible said, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But he said unto him, "Me, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist of the abundance of the things which he possesses." Then he spoke a parable to them saying, the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself saying, "What shall I do since I have no room for to bestow my crops?" And so, he said, "I will do this. I'll pull down my barns and build greater and there will I store all of my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'" But God said unto him, "Fool, this night, thy soul shall be required of thee. Then who shall all of those things be which thou hast provided? So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

I want to begin by saying that there are rich men who are very poor and there are some very poor men who are very rich. And to be able to see that, we have to understand that we're looking not the physical values of one's life, but really the spiritual values are the ones that really count. When did Jesus tell us that this man went wrong? He was a successful farmer. If you look at verse 16, the Bible said he was not when his fields were beautiful, and harvest was abundant with all of his crops.

Here was a man who had worked hard to prepare his fields, and the Lord had blessed them. And he certainly was not wrong in being a good farmer. Verse 17 said, it wasn't when he thought within himself, what shall I do? He evaluated a problem that had arisen in his life, and he began to try to dissect how he would handle those problems. And it's good to make decisions, business decisions, and that's the will of God. But he was surely wrong when it got to the point where he said, "I have no room where to bestow my goods." He had no room for all of God's blessings, but he had a really empty space in his soul. He has a great opportunity to help other people to follow in the steps of Jesus, but in his greed, he left everything out. He left others out. He left God out. He left the plan of God out. God expects us to be a people that are a giving people. God gives us much of what we have to enable us to share with other people.

In Colossians 3:5, Paul makes a statement concerning the statement of Jesus about this farmer. He said that he was a covetous man. And to the Colossian brethren Paul said, "Therefore, put to death your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. And that was kind of a surprise to me that he would list the sin of covetousness with the carnal sins like fornication or spiritual uncleanness or evil passions or desires. And covetous fits in that because the idea of lust is the same concept. Our life cannot be involved about just those things that pertain to us. He said the same thing to the Ephesian brethren in chapter 5 and in verse 5 when he said, "For this you know that no fornicator, unclean person or covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." And so, the man wasn't wrong when he looked at the things that he had and the prosperity that the Lord had given him. But the fatal mistake that this foolish man made is described in verse 5 or verse 19 when he said, "And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die.'" This man talked to himself. This certainly wasn't soul talk. These certainly was not spiritual concepts that he was dealing with. The voice that you're hearing this man use is the voice of the flesh. The spiritual man cannot be satisfied with the things that are natural. And Paul explained that in Galatians 5:17 when he said, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary one to the other so that you cannot do the things that you wish." The idea of covetousness and the real danger there is that it's so controlling. It keeps our lives in a battle where we're fighting against ourselves because part of us wants to go the way of our own betterment. And there's another part within us that wants to follow the plan of God.

If I was to ask you today, who is your favorite preacher in all the history of the world, not counting Jesus, I think most of us would probably say it was the apostle Paul. He's the greatest evangelist that ever lived, preached the gospel throughout the world under tremendous persecutions and great difficulty. But he said this about himself in Romans 7 beginning at Verse 14. He said, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I'm carnal, sold under sin. For what am I doing I do not understand. For what I will to do that I do not practice. But what I hate that I do. If then I do what I will not do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me that is in my flesh nothing good dwells. For the will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not do, but the evil that I will not do, that's what I practice. Now, if I do that which I would not do, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, and the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man. But I see another law in my members. Listen, I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" And then Paul declared, "I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

It's hard to think about the apostle Paul dealing with the problems of covetousness, isn't it? I mean, he was a man who gave his life. I mean, literally gave his life. They stoned him to death in Lystra and the brethren gathered around him. And by the power of God, he was resurrected from the dead and got up to continue preaching. I mean, he was committed to the law of Jesus Christ. But when he gives you an inner picture of himself, he wants you to understand that these are things that he struggled with too. And if Paul struggled with those issues, surely you and I are at risk, are in danger of doing those very same things.

In Chapter 8, we just read Paul's acknowledgement in Chapter 7, but listen to Chapter 8 beginning at verse 10 when he said, "And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if we live according to the flesh, we will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." The real battle that happens within us is the issue is so personal to us. It's all about us. It's about what we think. It's about our family. It's about our friends. It's about our jobs.

Do you ever stand someplace, maybe even in a church house, and you're visiting with some of the brethren or maybe a sister in Christ and she's telling you all about her life and her medical conditions and their vacation and all the things that they do, and she'll take 15 minutes in that conversation? And when it's over, you realize you never got a chance to say anything about your family, because our world has come to a place that most folks just concentrate on themselves.

I think one of the risks or dangers that happens to us in our fast-growing IT world is that we're getting away from the personal contact that's necessary as we teach and preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're to go into all men and preach the gospel to every creature. That's the mission of the church. And this man was very successful in business. And we have a lot of brethren, and we have a lot of friends, friends who watch this program on a regular basis, who are very successful. You're very good at your job. You've been well-educated. You've worked hard. You've got that drive in you that makes you successful, and that's great for you and your family. But the danger these passages said is that when we start making those issues really what's most important, when we begin to look at our life and our family and our home and where we live and what we know and what we can do and don't think anything about the Lord, our spiritual matters. We're covetous people. And as I said a moment ago, when Paul talks about covetousness in his own life, he's also the one who told us that the sin of covetousness is like the sin of fornication or immorality. It's something that is a very strong pull on our life like the sexual desire and really leads us into this horrible sin that Jesus called covetousness.

Do you remember Esau? Do you remember the story in Genesis 25 when one of the brothers went off to hunt? He had a little brother who was more like his mama, I guess. While the big brother went out to hunt and enjoy all the things in the woods and the wild life that he wanted to live, his little brother was home cooking a pot of beans. And when the hunter decided to turn home, he made his journey, and across the breeze there came the smell of his brother's pot of beans cooking. And you know when you've hunted or fished all day when you've done what you wanted to do and you've been so concentrating on those issues, you don't even think about eating. In fact, if you go on a trip and you come back, a lot of times you don't even realize you're hungry until you get to the truck. You don't think about it while you're doing your hunting and fishing. But this man on his way back got the smell of his brother's beans and it really affected him. And when he came to his brother, he asked him to eat. And

his brother asked him, "What will you give me for it?" And that's really the question of the ages, isn't it? It all comes down to what it costs, especially in a covetous world.

And he said, "What will you give me for it? Would you give me your birthright?" And the Bible said Esau thought within himself and his form of reasoning was 'I'm going to die anyway. I'm starving to death. And if I don't eat, I'm going to die. And if I'm going to die, what's the birthright to me? What does it mean to me?' You see how he's weighing out the balance? You see how he's thinking within himself as to how things are going to really work in his life? All he could think about right now is me. I need to be satisfied, and it's going to take a bowl of beans to do it. And yet the Bible talks about him when the Hebrew writer said in chapter 12 in verse 15 and 16, he said, "Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." We don't get the idea about Esau's immorality. We know he loved to hunt. We know he loved to be out in the woods. We know he enjoyed all of those blessings that come from God and incorporated them in his life evidently often. But now the writer of the Hebrew epistle tells us that Esau was a profane person and he decided that because he was like a fornicator, and again, there's the same issue that Paul addressed in the Colossian epistle and the Ephesian epistle that we mentioned ago. It's something that really gains control of us and drives us in the wrong direction.

So, we need to be very careful about the sin of covetousness. We need to understand that life here on earth is really not just about me and mine or you and yours. It comes down to fulfilling the law of God in your life. And when you look at the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, his life was always about somebody else. He was God. He was the creator of all the universe, Paul said to the Colossian brethren. And yet because of your need and my need, he left heaven's bliss and came to earth and died, died the horrible death of the cross. Not because he needed to, not because he was guilty, but you and I were guilty. You and I were lost eternally. We had no hope without the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. We had no hope of salvation unless Jesus stepped up to the plate and he did. And he knocked it out of the park, and he gave us the opportunity of eternal life through the sacrifice that he made. He lived his life from eternity to eternity for the well-being of all of us.

At the end of this story, Jesus quickly tells the close of the man's life when he said in verse 20 and 21, "But God said to him, "Fool, this night your soul will be required of thee. Then who shall all of those things be which thou hast provided? So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." There's the issue, brethren. So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." Is your life all about you? Is it all about what you like? Is it all about what you have, all about what you're doing? Do you have time to look on a neighbor that may not be as blessed, who may be lost, eternally lost and headed in the wrong direction? Do you brethren who watch this program ever really give serious thought to the purpose of this program to reach the lost souls with a saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? This program is not about itself. This program is about other people. You can say no to your mother. You can say no to your loved ones. You can even say no to the preacher. You can say no to the word of God. You can stand and squeeze the back of a pew during an invitation song and never walk up the aisle to give yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ. But one of these days, you're not going to be able to put it off. One of these days you can say no to the preacher, and you can say no to the folks or all of those things, but somebody's going to knock on your door. Death is going to knock on your door, and you're going to yield to death. You're going to answer that knock.

We don't know when it happened, but we do know that when Jesus addressed the issue of this covetous man who interrupted him in his speech and says, "Lord, I want you to understand, my brother's not

treating me right, not when it comes to money. I want you to talk to them. I want you to talk to him about that. I want you to change his heart and change his mind." But the Lord just said, "I'm not an arbitrator in those matters." But that one who's not an arbitrator is going to be your eternal judge.

In Jeremiah 9:21, the prophet said, For death has come through our windows and has entered our palaces." Our homes are a place of security, but they can't shut death outside. Death is going to come. It's going to come to your life. And then the apostle said in 2 Corinthians 5:10, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body according to that which they've done, whether they be good or bad.

One of these days you're going to stand before the Lord to give an account of how you lived your life. If it's all about you, you're headed the wrong direction.

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