

"Fool's Gold"

11/29/20

Luke 12: 15-21 LB "15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? '18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 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. ' "20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

ILLUS: When I was a kid, I went through a phase of collecting rocks, crystals, fossils, and so on.

One day I came up on this beautiful, glittering, yellow rock that I immediately thought was gold.

This is a parable from Jesus designed to teach us about the folly of covetousness—which is to live for material things.

It's also a warning not to live only for yourself.

Materialism, says Jesus, is the 'fool's gold' so many chase after.

He presents a man who is very successful in business.

In fact, he's living the equivalent of the American dream!

His farm has been so blessed with abundant harvest that his barns are overflowing—his blessing is literally more than he can handle!

So he proceeds to have a conversation with himself that provides us a window into his soul.

Everything that comes out of his mouth begins with "I"—There are six of them.

First, he considers his problem:

"What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? "

There's the first two "I's".

Most men in Jesus's day were married, but there's no "what shall WE do?"—It's only "what shall I do?"

And the thought of asking God what to do about the problem is nowhere in his mind.

He doesn't think to thank God for his great blessing because it's never occurred to him that God is where it all came from!

So it also goes without saying he's not going to ask God for wisdom, either.

He is dealing with life the way most people do—What shall "I" do? How shall "I" handle this problem?

The Bible teaches that God delights in being sought for wisdom and counsel when we encounter problems:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5 NKJV).

—But this man is a self-made man!

He is totally independent from others, and is disconnected from God.

He perfectly illustrates the old Frank Sinatra song that boasted, "I did it my way."

Then Secondly, he makes a decision.

18 "So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.'"

Here we have three more "I's".

His decision is to make more room for what he doesn't even need, to hoard his riches.

Again, there is not a single thought about God or others—it's all about him—I, I, I.

He has more than he could ever want, yet it's still not enough—which is the essence of covetousness.

When you are covetous, more is never enough.

As soon as you get this, you want that.

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The Bible tells the truth when it says, “Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of (carnal) man are never satisfied” (Prov. 27:20 NKJV).

The flesh is never satisfied, never content, always chasing the next pot of gold at the end of the next rainbow.

But Jesus says it’s FOOL’S GOLD!

Following his first decision, he makes a SECOND one—it’s time to RETIRE:

19 “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.’ ”

Here we have the last “I”.

He surveys all of his belongings and his wealthy 401k, and says to himself, “It’s time to step aside and enjoy life without work.”

In today's parlance he's accumulated millions of dollars to live on for the many years he thinks he has left.

If he were alive today he'd be planning to hit the golf course, sip Pina Coladas on some tropical beach, see the world, sleep late, take it easy, and enjoy the fruits of all his labor.

There is no better picture in the Bible of a man achieving the American dream than this one!

Work hard, play hard, laugh hard, get rich, live for yourself, and when you've got enough set aside, retire and live out the rest of your days doing whatever you like.

But according to Jesus this is a false view of life!

Because look what happens next:

"20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'"

Now remember, God's been nowhere in his life.

But now God suddenly enters the narrative to tell him his life is over.

And the first thing God says is to call him a FOOL!

His whole view of life—living for himself, not acknowledging God, chasing after endless material things, assuming he had years left on the calendar, all is wiped away by one word from God, “FOOL!”

And on top of that, God informs him that others are going to get what he worked for—he can't take any of it with him where he's going!

Now we come to the moral of the story, the all-important thing he missed:

“So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

You should have been rich toward God!

In closing, I want to give you 3 quick ways we can be rich toward God:

I. With your time

Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33 NKJV).

FIRST is a priority word, and priority points to what you do with your time.

Jesus is telling us to prioritize God into our daily calendar **FIRST.**

I am being rich toward God when I wake up and immediately put Him first, give Him the first **TIME of every day!**

How much time have you and I given God this week?

Seconds? Minutes? Hours?

A second way to be rich toward God is:

II. By helping others

When Jesus tells us about His return to earth, He says there will be two types of people—those that helped others in His name, and those that didn't:

"I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was

naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me” (Matt. 25: 35-36 NKJV).

Those He says this to say, “Lord, when did we do all these things for You?”

And Jesus replies, “Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me!”

The Bible exhorts all Christians, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal 6:10 NKJV).

When we bless others in the name of Jesus, we are being rich toward God!

One final way to be rich toward God is:

III. Giving to His work

The rich man in our story had more finances than he knew what to do with—but it never ONCE occurs to him to give any of it back to God, or to help others.

He wanted ONLY to spend it on himself.

You will never hear me say that if you give ten dollars, God will give you back a hundred.

Or that if you don't tithe ten percent to the church you're going to come under some kind of curse.

God does not want our giving to be out of fear, or begrudgingly.

But you WILL hear me say that you should give to the Lord's work with joy out of sheer thanksgiving for what He has done for you!

The Bible says, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7 NIV).

"Each of you!"

So, we are rich toward God when we:

Give our time to Him

Bless others in His name, and

Give of our finances to His work