

We face a real enemy who seeks to kill, steal, and destroy us. The war rages all around us even when we cannot see it. We rarely recognize how much danger we are in. Satan likes to appear as an angel of light and in disguise. The enemies weapons and traps are often invisible to us.

One of his weapons we don't fear at all. We don't live in fear of it. In fact, most of us long for it. We even pray that God would put in closer contact with it. But we don't realize how destructive it is. We don't recognize that we long for puts us in terrible danger.

The weapon is money. Because the love of money is the beginning of evil. And having money exposes you to it. Today, Jesus will try to warn us of the terrible danger that money brings. And He will warn us of how we can avoid it.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 12:13-34

Point 1: **Do not covet more money (v. 13-21).**

Jesus commands us to not be jealous of the money others have. He commands His followers to not desire more money than they have. And He commands us to be careful the desire for money does not take root in our hearts.

Verse 13, **"Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."**

Someone wants Jesus to settle a dispute.

It appears that their parents have died and left an inheritance.

Typically the bulk of a parents wealth goes to the eldest son.

The eldest son gets most of the inheritance and then decides how to split the rest.

Usually when someone dies with money and a good inheritance, it leads to conflict and fighting.

That is what is happening here.

The younger sibling seems to be upset with their brother.

They are not happy with how much of the money or possessions they have been given.

They want more.

And they are coming to Jesus to ask Him to fix it.

Now, coming to a Rabbi with this kind of dispute was not uncommon. Religious leaders often would have had to deal with these arguments.

But look again at what they say, **"Teacher, TELL my brother to divide the inheritance with me."**

They are not asking Jesus for His opinion.

They want Jesus to force their brother to give them more.

And the impropriety of their request is why Jesus responds the way He does.

Verse 14, **"But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?"**

This is Jesus rebuking them.

Jesus isn't saying that He doesn't have enough Authority.

He says He has too much Authority.

Moses might have settled inheritance disputes but Jesus is greater than Moses and He does not.

This would be like going to the CEO of a massive multinational company, and demanding a meeting with him because you think the napkins and one of the cafeterias need to be different.

And it's not that he doesn't have the authority to make that decision, is that this decision is a waste of his time.

And how dare you demand that he do what you want.

But this is what this person does.

They come to Jesus and they demand that Jesus tell their brother to give them more money.

And Jesus wants to know if this person believes that he was born of a virgin, fed the 5000, cast out demons, and healed all the sick so that he can tell people that they should have more money.

Verse 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."**

Instead Jesus rebukes them.

Jesus tells them that they need to stop breaking the 10th commandment. To stop desiring and longing for what others have.

You may notice that Luke doesn't tell us whether or not the eldest brother was in the right or not.

This person may very well have a very legitimate complaint.

The oldest brother could be keeping everything for themselves.

They could be ignoring the wishes of their parents or stealing.

Jesus doesn't get into any of that,

Jesus be careful that you are not coveting which your older brother has.

And Jesus gives a reason why they should not be coveting.

"for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

what makes a life a good one?

What is it that makes life worth living?

What is it that makes us look at somebody's life and smile and say oh they seem to have a good life?

Jesus says it's not having a lot of stuff.

It is not having a lot of land.

It is not having a lot of ca cattle or crops.

It is not having a lot of lucrative businesses.

Jesus says it's not having a lot of money.

Your life is not defined by what you have.

Now this is somewhat of an anti-American idea.

Because we certainly think that life at least has something to do with the abundance of possessions.

If we see somebody who is poor has nothing and nowhere to live we or tempted to assume it is their fault.

They must have brought it upon themselves and they probably have a terrible life.

And if we see someone who has a great abundance of possessions like billionaires we can assume they must have a great life. We could assume that they must have deserved it made good decisions or earned it.

Jesus tells us now that's not what life is about. Life is not about having an abundance of money. It can be hard to understand what Jesus means so in order to help us he tells us a story.

Verse 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?'"**

Someone has a lot of land and they get a really good harvest.

Their land produces plentiful.

It is way more than they normally get.

It is so much more than they normally get they don't know what to do with it.

They don't have anywhere to store the extra crop.

Their grain silos are full there's no more room in the barns.

This is a great problem to have.

This is the kind of problem all of us would want to have.

To have so much money that you don't know what to do with it.

Now the central question of the parable in the story is what do we do with our abundance?

So this man comes up with a very practical solution.

Verse 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.'"**

He doesn't have enough room in his barn so now he needs bigger barns.

This is what most of us would do right?

You don't have room, so you make room.

If your restaurant is so full that the line is going out the door and there's not space for everybody to sit, then you start thinking about how to expand it and get more space.

If your retail store has so many customers there's not room for everybody you get a bigger one.

If your cattle reproduces so much that your herd is getting bigger you build more stables and buy more land.

This man's land produces so much crops that he builds bigger barns so we have somewhere to put them so they don't go bad or waste away in the field.

He wants to build something that'll be able to store all of them.

And to not be wasteful he tears down the old barns to build new and bigger ones.

The ones that will be able to hold everything so that he doesn't have to have his problem again.

Verse 19, **"And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."**

After all what a relief this will be.

It can be hard for farmers.

Their livelihood depends on the Harvest.

If the Harvest is very poor they are going to suffer all year long.

It could only take one really bad Harvest to ruin them.

And a really good harvest like this one could mean that you would be safe and secure for many years.

And this is why the man celebrates.

"I will say to my soul, "Soul you have ample goods laid up for many years, relax, eat, drink, be merry."

He's going to relax because he has nothing to worry about.

He is enough goods to last for years.

He finally is enough saved up to retire it's not worried about what the next Harvest will be.

He can instead just enjoy his life and do all of the things that he's been wanting to do.

It's part of our American Dream isn't it?

To be able to relax and enjoy the fruit of our labors.

To sit under our own vine and fig tree.

And instead of spending our days working 9:00 to 5:00 to try to Squeak

My we can feast and take a nap and travel to your grandkids.

Verse 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?'"**

But God says this person is a fool.

He says that on this very night they are going to die.

They thought their soul could spend its time pursuing pleasure and happiness.

But God says that their souls time is up.

And all of those crops that they have made all these plans for.

All those bigger Barns and silos that they're getting ready to build.

All of the wealth that they have accumulated so that they can enjoy it It's going to be somebody else's.

Cuz when you die you can't take anything with you.

Even if you were buried like the great kings of Egypt in a pyramid surrounded by your stuff, it won't go with your soul.

It'll stay right there till years later someone's going to break in and steal it.

And all the stuff that we've accumulated.

One day your children or your other relatives will fight each other over it.

And the stuff that they don't want will end up in the trash.

Or they'll sell it in an estate sale trying to get some more money.

So what should be do instead?

Verse 21, **"So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."**

The point of Christ's story is that those who covet. Those who try to amass more and more possessions for themselves. So that they can have Financial Freedom, a luxurious retirement, or whatever else they want to call it, are like this man. They are building up a pile of things that they can't take with them.

And if you are laying up and collecting treasure and possessions for yourself, you are not rich towards God. You might be considered rich by those around you but God does not consider you rich. It is better to be rich in the fruits of the spirit than in your bank account. It is better to be like Jesus than like a billionaire.

One thing that's very important in this story is the beginning. It happened so fast you might miss this detail. I didn't catch it till after I reread the story several times. Look back to verse 16, "**the land of a rich man.**" This is somebody who already has an abundance. They already have enough. They already have more than they need and they get even more. And in their greed they keep it for themselves. They are not content with what God has given them they want even more.

The question of what should this person do with all their abundance is they should give it away. They shouldn't keep it for themselves they should give it to others. They should sell it for cheaper than it's worth. They should be willing to sell it at a loss and make less money so that others can have out of their abundance. They're already rich they don't need more.

The problem with stories about the rich is that we never see ourselves in their place.

If I said raise your hand if you're rich I don't think any of us would put up our hands.

Because rich is a relative term.

And the riches always somebody who has more money than I do because I'm not rich.

But all of us even the poorest Among Us have more money have more possessions have more things than someone else in our own community.

And if I asked them to point at somebody who is Rich they would turn and point their fingers at us.

So the question is not what would we have to do one day if we got rich and then had an abundance the question is what will we do today with the abundance we've been given?

Do we covet and want more wealth for ourselves?

Or are we content with the riches that God has given us?

So you might have an objection.

You might be tempted to say that well Jesus I'm not trying to be rich I'm just trying to have enough so I can provide for myself and for my family.

Jesus has something to say to us here too.

Point number 2: **Do not worry about having enough money (v. 22-30).**

Because this is one of our favorite go-to excuses.

We tell ourselves and God that we aren't being greedy we just need enough.

But Jesus gives this admonishment on the heels of telling us to not covet and desire for money

Verse 22, "And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing."

And begins with Jesus saying therefore.

He means based on what I have just told you about not laying up Treasures for yourself, therefore do not be anxious.
And zhe does not want them to worry about having enough
He doesn't want them to worry about what they're going to eat.

Jesus own disciples are dependent on him for what they will eat.
Jesus doesn't have a house he's staying at.
Jesus does not have a fridge that has stocked with food.
The disciples might not even know where they're going to go to bed tonight.
But Jesus tells them do not worry about what we'll eat.
Because after all Jesus fed thousands of crowds even when they didn't have very much food.
Jesus doesn't want a disciples to hoard their money because they're worried if they'll be able to eat tomorrow.

He also says not to worry about their clothes.
Food and clothing very basic needs that we have as human beings.
If you do not have any clothes it is hard to participate in society.
If you have any food it's hard to stay alive.
If you're running low on both it is natural to worry and to be anxious about them.
But Jesus tells us, His disciples, don't worry about these things.

And He says in verse 23, **"for life is more than food, and the body more than clothing."**

Some of you might have been with Jesus and verse 15 but he might lose you in 23.

We can get on board with the idea that life is not about money.
We might have a harder time with life is not about being able to eat or not having to be naked because you have no clothes.
Yeah Jesus says life isn't about those things there's something more important.

Jesus turns again to the birds this time not to sparrows but to Ravens.

Verse 24, **"Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!"**

Jesus wants them to look at Ravens.

Ravens don't plant seeds in the ground.

They don't tend to their crops or have Farms.

They don't build big barns or storehouses so they can have food for the winter.

Yeah they are alive not because of their resourcefulness but because God feeds them.

And if God feeds them, how much more can God feed you?

How much more will Jesus provide for the disciples who have left everything to follow him?

It might be important to note that Ravens are unclean Birds.

Leviticus 11:15 and Deuteronomy 14:14 describe them as being birds that they should not eat.

Because if they eat them they will be unclean they will be unable to worship God until they make sacrifices and repent.

So ravens would have been viewed not as worthless but as Birds to avoid because they are an abomination before God.

Yet God says He loves them and He takes care to feed them everyday.

And if God does that for the animals that He says are unclean how much more will He do that for you His children?

And so why should you worry?

Verse 25, **"And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?"**

Jesus wants to know if our worry helps put food in our bellies or not?

Does our time spent worrying help us live longer?

There was a time when I was between jobs and spent a couple months living with her in laws doing part-time work while I tried to look for a full-time job.

And I spent a lot of that time worrying.

Wrestling and wondering if it's going to be able to provide food for my family and clothes for the kids who continue to grow and need more clothes.

Not a single minute that I spent worrying accomplished a thing.

It didn't help God whatsoever and it certainly didn't help me.

God wants to know why we worry because he will feed us all we need.

He then turns to use the example of flowers.

Verse 27, **"Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!"**

What work do flowers do?

What jobs do they have or what retirement accounts do they fill up?

Yet God close them in wondrous colors.

You can go to Botanical Gardens or arboretums or many of the gardens that some of you here have and see beautiful flowers.

You can just drive down the highway in the spring and look at the wild flowers and the beauty that grows.

Jesus says they had more beautiful clothing that even Solomon and all this Glory.

Even the richest man who had ever lived at that point in time did not have better clothes than the daisy that grows in your yard.

Clothes provided by God alone.

And if God does that for flowers.

The fields and the grass with such wonderful Beauty.

Grass that Withers and flowers that fade away and get burned when the seasons change,
If God does that for them how much more will he clothe you that he loves?

He even ends in 28, "**O you of little faith!**"

You who doubt that God can provide for you.

You who think that you need to hoard up wealth and money for yourself so that you can meet your needs.

When we gather possessions up for ourselves we are not just being covetous, or greedy, we are being faithless.

Verse 29, "**And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. 30 For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.**"

Christians should not have anxiety and anxiousness over having our needs met.

We should trust that God will provide what we need.

Now God might not provide what we want.

Much like the person who came up to Jesus and once their brother to give them more money from The Inheritance.

Jesus will often frustrate us and say no I'm not going to give you more money.

But God will provide you what you need to survive if you trust him.

The difference between the world and those in the kingdom of God is that the world is anxious and covetous over what they think they need.

And Christians are supposed to seek God instead.

We are supposed to trust that God is our father and that he knows what we need.

That he knows how expensive groceries are.

We should trust that he knows how much our kids eat.

And instead of wasting our lives worrying about if we have enough money we should trust that what we have now is a gift from God and it's what he believes we need.

It doesn't just mean do not worry about having enough.
This is not mainly an argument against anxiety or worry.
Jesus is trying to dismantle our excuses for why we are coveting money.
Instead of wanting more, we should give it away.

Point number 3: **Do not seek money, seek the kingdom (v. 31-34).**

Verse 31, **"Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you."**

This is what we are to do instead of worrying.

This is what we are to do instead of coveting.

This is what we are to do instead of laying up treasure for ourselves here on Earth.

Instead of seeking the things of the world we seek the things of God.

Instead we seek his kingdom.

And when we seek the kingdom of God then he gives us what we need.

It's almost a paradox.

If you seek the things of the world you might not get them, but you definitely won't be in the Kingdom.

But if you are willing to give up the things of the world.

If you were willing instead to seek the king then He gives us what we need.

Verse 32, **"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."**

We even get this beautiful encouragement.

That it is God's good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

It means that we don't have to worry.

We do not have to wonder if God really will give us what we need or not.

We do not have to wonder if it really will be worth it to sacrifice even to sacrifice financially in order to seek God in his kingdom.

We don't have to wonder if it will be a good investment or use of our time or not.

It will be.

God cannot wait to give you the kingdom.
God cannot wait for you to see the immeasurable blessings that come from being His disciple and from following Him.
But we have to be willing to seek Him not money.
We have to have eyes that are looking towards the city that is to come instead of the dream house you would build if you have enough money.

Now how do we do this?
How can we lay up Treasures in Heaven and seek the kingdom of God?
After all that sounds very aspirational and principle but practically in concrete actions how do we do this?
I have great news Jesus told us exactly how to do it.

Verse 33, **"Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."**

Maybe we need to read the first part of that verse again.

"Sell your possessions and give to the needy."

Man that's a very strange verse isn't it.

Don't worry I have good news I've studied a lot of Greek.

So I'm here to unlock this passage for you.

When Jesus says sell your possessions and give to the needy, what he means in the original Greek is that you should sell your stuff and give it to people who don't have your stuff.

The problem with verses like this is not that we don't understand them so we don't like them.

Jesus's words Pierce our hearts.

It convicts us.

And so we come ready with all of our excuses.

We immediately start to think what this must mean instead.

Surely Jesus mustn't mean that I need to sell my possessions and give to the poor he must be talking about something else.

He must just mean his disciples he doesn't mean me.

But what if Jesus actually met what he said?

What if Jesus actually meant that we should sell our possessions and give to those in need?

I think he does.

The way that you store up treasures in Heaven is by giving away your Treasures here.

We give them away.

This is what the man in the parable should have done.

And this is what we should do.

Our main objection might be that we need enough to live and to provide for ourselves.

But Jesus just told us not to worry about that.

And because we don't have to worry about it we can give.

We can even give what we have away.

This is meant to be one of the Hallmarks of Christian generosity.

It is not that we give out of our abundance it is that we don't seek abundance and we give what we do have which might not seem like very much away.

This is what the early church did in the book of Acts.

They didn't pay their bills and then see what was left over and then see if they had the means to give to others.

They didn't have enough money to give to others.

And so they went home and they sold their stuff and then they went and they gave.

What would it look like if we did this again?

What would it look like if we as Christians were this generous?

What if when the land produces plentiful for us we gave it away?

What if when we were given raises and bonuses we didn't increase our standard of living?

What if when we made more money instead of buying a bigger house and a nicer car and more stuff we gave more away?
Don't we took Jesus literally and seriously?

What if we were willing to give away what we had because we know that our treasure is not here our treasures and the kingdom to come.
Because wherever our treasure is our heart is there also.
If you are unwilling to sell your things to give to the needy your heart is with your things and not with Jesus.

Look this is convicting for me too.
I don't want to sell my stuff I like my stuff that's why I bought it.
But Jesus calls us.
In Jesus invites us.
And if we are willing to seek the kingdom of God.
If we are willing to do what the Rich Young Ruler was not,
if we are willing to sell and to sacrifice and to give away not our leftovers
not our extra not our spare change but things that we care and love for
then our hearts are with Jesus.
Is your heart in the kingdom of God or is your heart with your stuff?

Jesus was willing to give up all of the treasures of heaven to come to earth
He left it all behind to come with nothing to save us.
And His death on the cross in our place gives us salvation.
A greater treasure than you could ever imagine.
Compared to that treasure, why would you care about green pieces of paper?

1. Don't covet more money, Don't worry about having enough money, Don't seek money, seek the kingdom.
2. And seek the kingdom of God by giving your money away. Don't store up your treasures here. This life is but a vapor and you can't take anything with you. But when we give things away we are storing up heavenly treasure in the kingdom that is to come.