

## *Valley Bible Church – Parables of Jesus*

**Parable Lesson 20: Your life lasts forever. Prepare for it!**

### **THE MAN GOD CALLED A FOOL**

**Luke 12:16-21**

#### ***Introduction:***

Some say the Parable of the Good Samaritan is the most practical of all the parables. If that is true, and it may be, the Parable of the Rich Fool may be the most necessary. It is very simple, extremely practical, and hard-hitting.

God did not use the term fool lightly, but He did point out the foolishness of men many times and directly called them fool occasionally:

*Matthew 6:19-21-Matt. 6:19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Lay up treasures in heaven = Wise = How to be truly rich

Lay up treasures on earth = Foolish = How to be truly poor

*Matthew 7:24-27-"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and {yet} it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And **everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall.**"*

Hear and do = Wise Man = Builds character that stands through trials

Hear don't do = Fool = Builds character that crumbles under pressure

In today's parable Jesus calls the main character a fool and supports His accusation with the facts.

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### **THE SETTING**

### **JESUS INSTRUCTS**

#### **Jesus is rejected. (Chapter 11)**

His own people have attributed His healing ministry and His casting out of demons to Satan.

The Pharisees and Scribes, who should be His spiritual mentors, have attacked His approach to ministry and people

#### **Jesus responds. (Chapter 12)**

Chapter 12 begins with some of Jesus' heaviest teaching in reaction to those rejections. His subject is hypocrisy and His message is, "***be sure to respect and fear the right authority.***"

*Luke 12:4--"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!"*

Then He explains why they need not fear the Pharisees:

*Luke 12:6--"Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And {yet} not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows. And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."*

### **JERK INTERRUPTS (Read Luke 12:13)**

#### **He wasn't listening**

Jesus is teaching important spiritual concepts and his mind has wandered to personal things. He has an important business matter preying on his mind. Of course, we would never do that during a presentation of the truth. Would we?

#### **He was thinking about money**

His father gave his children an inheritance. Under Jewish law, his oldest brother got 2/3 of the estate to set up his own family and the other sons share the rest. It is up to the older brother when and how to give them their money.

Either he had not given them theirs yet or he has but this man wants more of the pie. Jesus' answer seems to indicate the latter. Perhaps Jesus can use His considerable influence to make it happen.

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### **JESUS INTERACTS** (Read Luke 12:14 and 15)

#### **Jesus not interested in the legal problem**

Jesus refuses to deal with the legal question, and He has no desire to talk about the letter of the law.

#### **Jesus is interested in the moral problem**

Jesus is always more interested in:

The spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law,

The heart issue rather than the physical problem'

The question of who a man is rather than what a man has.

Matt. 6:21--"*for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*"

Look at what Jesus says in verse 15:

**Beware** --Look out; be on your guard against

**Greed** --Every form of an inordinate desire to get more

**Why?** --Because there is a vital difference between what a man has and who he is. "*for not {even} when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.*"

### **THE STORY: Read Luke 12:16-21**

My dad once called this parable a story about a man who had lots of dollars but no sense. *Please notice five things about this fool:*

#### **HE WAS A GODLESS FOOL**

Ps. 14:1--"*The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'*"

#### **He is not a bad man**

He is not the typical church villain. He is a hard working, honest, smart, successful businessman.

#### **He has a huge blind spot**

He is blind to the fact that God controls his ability to be successful in his farming. He thinks he's a great farmer.

Mark 4:26 ". . .*The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts up and grows –how, he himself does not know.*"

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### **He thinks he own the stuff**

He fails to see himself as God's steward and understand that it is God who owns everything.

*Quote: "He was so immature as to make believe his belongings were really his . . . He lost his head, not to decease, but to his ego and raved on unnoticed in the popular chorus of human delirium.*

*When his ship came in he did not see the hand of God, so he could not see that he should share the cargo with a needy world. He selfishly assumed his surplus came with no strings attached. . . . When he was ready to retire and live of the fat, his time was up."*

*The question here is not "Was he good or evil," but "was he a fool."*

### **HE WAS A RICH FOOL**

#### **He set his heart on riches rather than on God**

*I Tim. 6:6--"But godliness {actually} is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. **But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang."*

#### **He shouldn't even split his allegiance**

*Matt. 6:24--"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

#### **Riches are to be shared**

In Luke 16 we find a story of a rich man and a beggar who both die. The beggar went to a place of bliss and the rich man went to a place of torment. It is made very clear in the story that the rich man had not shared his wealth, not even a crumb, with the beggar.

The meaning is plain. Riches are to be used to meet needs and if our hearts are right and we see out wealth as a stewardship, we will share with those truly in need.

### **HE WAS A SELF-CENTERED FOOL**

#### **He was totally egocentric.**

Mark Twain once introduced, "A woman whose center and circumference of her world was herself." That describes this man as well.

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In three verses he uses I six times and my five times.

**He even thinks he owns his own soul**

### **HE WAS AN AMBITIOUS FOOL**

**Ambition is commendable**

By definition ambition is simply the strong desire to reach a goal. Paul was ambitious when he said, "I strive, I labor, I work, I run." The question is . . .

**What is the goal?**

Security--"You have many goods laid up for many years."

Comfort--"take your ease"

Lusts--"eat, drink, and be merry"

**All goals are centered on something**

Whether we verbalize them or not, all our dreams and plans are tied up in this world or in the kingdom of God.

Matt. 6:33--"*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.*"

### **HE WAS A DOOMED FOOL**

Luke 12:20--"*But God said to him, 'You fool! This {very} night your soul is required of you; and {now} who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*"

**He could not buy one second of extra time.**

**He had been short sighted**

He was so earthly minded he was no heavenly good.

**God condemns his three mistakes:**

He mistook the purpose of work.

He mistook the purpose of life.

He mistook the purpose of things.

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### **THE SYNTHESIS**

#### **HE FORGOT PEOPLE**

##### **He thought only of himself**

He couldn't even begin to consume what he had and he still hoarded it.

##### **There are always needs all around**

Saving is important and wise, but hoarding is sin.

Surpluses are there to be used to meet other's needs.

##### **Jesus made it plain**

Luke 12:33--*"Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys."*

#### **HE FORGOT WHAT MAN IS**

##### **Man is more than what he has**

*"Life consists not in the abundance of things a man possesses."*

##### **Man's perspective VS God's perspective**

I Sam. 16:7--*" . . . God {sees} not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

##### **Therefore, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom.**

This is seen with the rich young man came to Jesus and in Jesus' statement, *"It is harder for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom."*

Money can be a weed that chokes out our concern for God and others. Money can be a barrier to keep us out of the presence of God.

#### **HE FORGOT THE SOURCE OF TRUE HAPPINESS**

##### **He thought he could be happy eating, drinking, and partying**

The time to work was ended and it was time to play.

##### **Solomon knew better**

Eccl. 2:3-11--*"I explored with my mind {how} to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding {me} wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives. I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted in them all kinds*

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*of fruit trees; I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves, and I had home born slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. Also, I collected for myself silver and gold, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men – many concubines.*

*Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. And all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.*

### **Dr. Pat Neff, Past President of Baylor University knew better**

*"All my life preachers have been telling me to lay up treasure in heaven, but none ever told me how to do it. I had to figure it out for myself. If I'm going to lay up treasures in heaven, I can't invest in farms, cattle, oil, or other things that are not going there. I must invest in things that are going to heaven--boys and girls, men and women."*

### **HE FORGOT GOD**

#### **It is not wrong to build bigger barns**

Joseph did that and he was a hero.

#### **It is wrong to be self centered**

"I will tell my soul, take your ease. Eat, drink, be merry."

#### **It is definitely wrong to leave God out of the plan**

Remember the businessmen that were confronted by James when they planned their business trips without consulting God or realizing that it is God that gives the ability to get gain?

### **HE FORGOT DEATH**

#### **He had an unrealistic view of life**

He thought he was going to retire and live for years. When I was in college I had a close friend who was a fine athlete, popular and active.

He was just beginning to live his life of promise but he was killed. The old evangelists were right. We don't know when we're going to die.

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### **It was no contest**

He said, "I'll enjoy life for many years."

God said, "*You fool! This very night your soul is required of you.*" **Who wins?**

### **How much did he leave?**

He left all of it. God said, ". . . *and now who will own what you have prepared?*"

## **THE SECRET**

### **DOES THIS APPLY TO US**

#### **We point to richer men**

Compared to most of Jesus' audience we are rich. Compared to most of the world today, we are extremely rich:

Each of us has a home, all with heat and most with air conditioning.

We all have a refrigerator, and many have an extra freezer. We all have a car, and many of us have two or more.

We all have toys, and many of them are expensive toys.

We all have indoor plumbing, and most of us have two or more bathrooms.

*So yes, it does apply to us.*

#### **Should we feel guilty?**

We have been greatly blessed but should we feel guilty?

No! Jesus didn't condemn wealth and his followers weren't Franciscan Monks who took an oath of poverty.

The Good Samaritan was a man of means and a good neighbor. Cornelius, the Roman officer had servants and many goods and he was a man of faith. Mary, Martha, Peter, Lydia, all owned homes and entertained others and they were disciples.

Not only that, but the message of the Gospel has gone and continues to go around the world because of the affluence of the Body of Christ.

*How then should we react?*



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### **WE SHOULD VIEW OUR WEALTH PROPERLY**

The rich man in this parable was really *spiritually* bankrupt.

#### **What did he gain?**

He gained the "*whole world*." He worked and worked, and worked to be able to retire and spent that wealth on himself. He just may have worked himself to death.

#### **What did he lose?**

He lost "*his own soul*." Verse 21--"*So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God*."

### **WHAT THEN IS THE PROPER VIEW OF OUR WEALTH**

**DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT**

**READ LUKE 12:22-30**

**USE IT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

**READ LUKE 12:31-34**