

## The Parable of the Rich Fool

### MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

Material prosperity can bring with it significant spiritual dangers. Sadly, many people who have enjoyed a comfortable standard of living find themselves neglecting God and neighbor in the quest for comfort and riches. Some seek security from money and possessions instead of from God, making an idol out of the good things that God provides. Others, driven by greed, resort to unethical and corrupt means of pursuing personal gain. In the midst of these pitfalls and temptations, the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12 offers a powerful reminder that fellowship with God is a far greater treasure than material wealth and personal belongings.

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Luke 12:13-21

### TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To present and exegete the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:13-21.
2. To discuss the potent dangers of covetousness, both then and today.
3. To warn against the ways that the desire for personal gain can undermine love for God and for other people.
4. To encourage believers to examine their own hearts and pursue God as their greatest treasure.

### QUOTATIONS

*Christ first guards his followers against covetousness, and next, in order to cure their minds entirely of this disease, he declares, that our life consisteth not in abundance. These words point out the inward fountain and source, from which flows the mad eagerness for gain. It is because the general belief is, that a man is happy in proportion as he possesses much, and that the happiness of life is produced by riches. Hence arise those immoderate desires, which, like a fiery furnace, send forth their flames, and yet cease not to burn within.* –John Calvin

*Therefore, you preachers, out with your swords and strike at the root. Speak against covetousness, and cry out upon it. Stand not ticking and toying at the branches nor at the boughs, for then there will new boughs and branches spring again of them; but strike at the root, and fear not these giants of England, these great men and men of power, these men that are oppressors of the poor; fear them not, but strike at the root of all evil, which is mischievous covetousness.* –Hugh Latimer

### BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The man who approached Jesus in Luke 12:13 was not interested in hearing Jesus teach. Instead, he wanted to use Jesus for his own personal gain. In what ways do Christians reveal this attitude toward Jesus today? How have you been tempted to use or recruit Jesus for your own purposes?
2. What is covetousness? Why is it wrong? What other sins can come as a result of a covetous spirit?
3. Jesus reminds us in Luke 13:15 that “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” All material blessings come from God and belong to God. This parable warns against the danger of storing up earthly treasures while being impoverished in the things of God. How does this parable apply to the way we manage God’s money with regard to 1) tithing? 2) giving to the poor and needy? 3) planning for the future?
4. What is a biblical definition of a fool? What are some ways that you are tempted to live as if God did not exist? How might God be calling you to repent and change?