

Luke 12:13-21

Be Rich Toward God

Image Church // The Gospel of Luke: Inverted Kingdom Wk. 17

Introduction

Acknowledge the transition back to ECMS...

- *I need 15 of you to sign up for Image Kids and 10 to sign up for FI!... We want a **hospitable** environment!*

Before we jump in this morning, I want to say **Happy Father's Day to all our dad's here today!** *Can we put our hands together for all the dad's?!*

Here's the deal Dad's, a quick challenge to you: today's not about celebrating you for what you **do** *outside* the home... Today's about celebrating who **you are** *within* the home...

A friend of mine wrote an article for **Christianity Today** where he said that *men are too busy trying to build an identity outside the home rather than embracing the work of the home...*

Dad's, you have to remember this: you're always **replaceable** when it comes to your job, but you are **irreplaceable** within your home... No one else can be dad, or husband, only you can do that...¹

Who you are *inside* the home is far more important than who you are *outside* of the home, so don't sacrifice your family on the altar of your career... Cherish today as a reminder of your primary calling- to be a present reflection of Christ in your home!

One of the biggest problems in our culture today is men not stepping up and being fathers modeling Christ and pointing their families to Christ! Men we must step up and step into the call God's given us.

And listen, I also know that there are some of you here, and today is tough because you didn't have a dad growing up, or maybe your dad has passed away, or maybe you had a dad, but he was abusive, or maybe he walked out on your family...

Today, I want to point you to a **Heavenly Father** one who will never leave you, and never forsake you, one who loves you unconditionally, one who's approval you will always have...

- One who allowed His own Son to die, so that He could adopt you as His... that's the Father you need to look to today!

I want to take just a min. and pray for our dad's **and** for those who today, are reminded of the scars or wounds and hurts surrounding their dads... **PRAY**

Alright, if you have your Bibles go ahead and turn to Luke 12...

As you're turning there let me get you up to speed with what's going on... Last week in **chapter 11** we saw that one of the religious leaders invited Jesus over for a meal...

And, well, it didn't turn out too great for the religious leader because it led to Jesus calling out their blatant hypocrisy as He help up the attitude of their hearts vs. the actions they were so proud of...

See, Jesus is always confronting seemingly moral external appearance with actual heart position... The heart is the Key...

Because religious morality will make everything about us, but a new God-given heart makes it all about Him...

The Pharisees missed that... Which is why they were so inconsistent... It's why they were so inaccurate and off base... They

¹ Chris Pappalardo: The best gift for Dad this Father's Day? Diaper Duty
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/june-web-only/fathers-day-diaper-duty-domestic-life.html>

were all about self-image, rituals, and works, which fundamentally rejects God's provision that would culminate through Jesus... And Jesus calls them out for it...

Well, the religious leaders get all fired up and defensive because Jesus just help up for them the reality of where their hearts really are and they didn't like it...

Here's a word of wisdom, one that will be applicable for even what we're discussing today... Often times, when you're confronted on something and it makes you **defensive**, it's a good indicator of an idol in your life...

Alright, so, Jesus leaves the religious leaders house and **Chapter 12:1** starts with: *Meanwhile, a crowd of many thousands came together, so that they were **trampling on one another**. He began to say to his disciples first...*

You **ever seen a bunch of cows at feeding time- they are all over each other?!? Or a group of high school girls at a Justin Bieber concert??** That's what's happening here...

And so, you have all these people piling in trampling all over each other, and then it's like you have Jesus sitting in a circle with his disciples where he is calmly addressing them...

- Tells them to watch out for the hypocrisy of the Pharisees...
- Be mindful that everything will eventually be exposed...
- Don't be afraid on men- God is in control and He will take care of them...
- Continue in faith, stand firm, don't crack under pressure, trust God and know that He will give you the words to say...

And then out of nowhere you have that **one guy with no feel**, who blurts his way into the conversation... **There's one in every crowd**... And that's where we're going to pick up today, *mid-disruption from the guy with no feel*... But in the **chaos**, we're going to see a heart

piercing and gut-wrenching message from Jesus... So here we go, let's jump in...

Luke 12:13-21

13 Someone from the crowd said to him, [this is the guy with no feel, you'll see what I mean...] "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." [completely out of left field]

14 [Jesus says] "Friend," "who appointed me a judge or arbitrator over you?"

Now this is an interesting response from Jesus, **but here's the point**: Jesus didn't come to settle personal disputes between men, Jesus came to settle an eternal dispute between God and humanity...

- Jesus is like hey bro, you're missing why I'm here...

This guy was more concerned about getting the **inheritance** right than he was with Jesus... **He saw Jesus as a means to something else**...

We see this all the time **sports**... *Biggest prayer warriors are the guys playing for the national championship*...

God's just viewed as a means to something else... If you're honest, the same is true for many of you... Wanna know how you can tell??

- **How much time do you spend praying about the things you want vs. the things that other people need??**

Do you see Jesus for who He is, or do we see Him for what He can do for you?

He didn't come to be your genie in a bottle, He came to be savior of the world and Lord of your life...

So, this guy blurts this deal out about inheritance and then in pure Jesus-fashion, Jesus uses this opportunity as a teaching moment... BTW: *You want to learn how to turn any conversation back to the gospel, just watch Jesus*...

15 He then told them, “Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.”

Now, why does Jesus respond this way...

Because Jesus knew his heart, He saw how concerned this man was with getting his portion of the inheritance...

He had to have that money, for him the money meant fulness of life, it meant fulfilment, it meant fun, it meant fun and enjoyment... It meant everything...

And he hasn’t been able to get it, so he comes to Jesus to see if He can make it happen...

And Jesus is saying to him in **verse 15**, this inheritance is deceiving you, don’t be enticed by it, what you’re believing about this inheritance is **hazardous** to your life! Money will lie to you, luring you into believing things that aren’t true!

- Which is why Jesus says *be on guard against Greed*- and this isn’t just a warning to this guy but to everyone...
- We have a disposition toward greed...
 - *How often are we like this guy??*

Jesus is saying, *you can’t find true life in the abundance of riches...*

*And then He unpacks this for them in **verse 15** with a parable...*²

16 Then he told them a parable: “A rich man’s land was very productive. **17** He thought to himself, ‘What should I do, since I don’t have anywhere to store my crops? **18** I will do this,’ he said. ‘I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and store all my grain and my goods there. **19** Then I’ll say to myself, “You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.”’ **20** “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared—whose will

they be?’ **21** “That’s how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

Ok, I want to make a couple of observations and then we can dive into the meat of this parable ...

1. There is nothing inherently wrong with being rich

The man in this parable is called rich, but there is nothing in this parable that speaks against being rich...

It is not about the fact that he was rich, but how he views his riches and what he did with his riches...

Now, I don’t say that to make the people that are **well off** feel better, I say that because the reality we’re all rich because we live in America.

- Americans account for more than **25%** of the world’s wealth
- If you make **\$34K** a year as household income, you are in the top **1%** worldwide...
- And **American Christians** have a combined annual income of **\$5 trillion**. We are the **richest faith community** in history!³

Even if you make below the household income of **\$34K** you’re still in the top **5%-10%** in the world...

The **bottom line** is that this parable is talking to all of us, not just those that **we** might label rich based on our standards...

So, when Jesus warns the rich, we better pay attention...

2. There is nothing wrong with you job bring prosperous

Jesus makes a point to say that this man very productive and prosperous, but that’s not why this man was condemned...

² Some thoughts in this section gathered from Johan Piper, sermon: *Let’s be right toward God*. January 8, 2012.

³ Facts from JD Greear, sermon. *Worth it*. First Series #2. November 21, 2018.

There is nothing wrong with getting a promotion or getting a raise, or hitting your bonus... There's nothing wrong when your investments do well, or your company takes off...

And there's nothing wrong with setting goals and *wanting* those things to happen, or striving to be successful... You **should** work hard and you should be proficient at your job...

- **Colossians 3** says that You should work diligently at your job as if you are working unto the Lord...
- **Proverbs** talks about not being lazy...

The last thing we want to do as Christians is be horrible at our jobs, that's not a good witness that's a terrible witness, we don't want to be **sub-par** as Christians, we want to strive for excellence in the workplace- **within reason!**

Listen, we want and need businesses to thrive for the sake of common good in our society...

So, what's the issue? Why was this guy condemned??

There's a key word in **verse 19**, right after he says he will tear down his barns and build bigger ones... He says: **Then I'll say to myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself"**

That word **myself** in the original language means **life** or **soul**... It's the *immaterial* part of a person, the cause of life: the heart, mind, and conscious...

In other words, this guy is saying that **true life** is found in leveraging his riches for himself to create comfort, security and abundance...

~~**His personal worth was wrapped up in his net worth.**~~⁴ Rather than in the God who generously gave everything to him in the first place.

His heart was tied to the abundance of riches in every sense... We **know** that based on what he **did** with what he had... Built a bigger barn for himself so that he could have a greater sense of security in this life...

- **Let me ask you this:** *What does the way that you spend your money reveal that your hearts tied to??* What does it reveal you trust in for preservation and security?

Here's what's **ironic**, the very thing that this guy desired to preserve, *his life*, was the very thing that was taken from him...

- **For some of you**, you're just like this guy, your life revolves around your riches and prosperity...

And the danger of money is that it will entice you into thinking that if you have it, it will preserve your life... That it will give you hope, security and comfort... But it can't...

That's the **warning** that Jesus is holding up in this parable, He's not condemning this guy for being **rich** or **prosperous**... He's showing what prosperity can do to us when it becomes tied to our heart.

CS Lewis said that: *"Prosperity knits a man to the world. He feels that he is finding his place in it, while really it is finding its place in him."*

You have to understand that there's only **one way** to preserve your life, there is only one way to find hope, security and comfort and it's not in money...

It's in the riches that God offers you through Christ... See, the problem with us is, ***we fail to see how great the riches of God are because we don't understand the kind of debt that we're in...***

⁴ Adapted and paraphrased from: Baumer, Gregory. God and Money: How We Discovered True Riches at Harvard Business School (Kindle Locations 1898-1902). Rose Publishing, Inc.

Each of us has turned our backs on God, going after the riches of this world and the pleasures of this world... Where we said “yes” to the way that we want to live life and “no” to God’s design for life...

We rebelled against the God that made us- standing in **opposition** against Him... And *like the man in this parable* we deserve for our lives to be taken...

But instead of taking our lives in punishment for our rebellion, God **sent** Jesus to do what we never could, living perfectly in our place... And His life wouldn’t be taken, **it would be given freely for us**...

So that in His resurrection, **we could have NEW life in Him!** And the incredible part is this, **not only do we get salvation from our sin through Christ, but we also get everything that we’ve been looking for in Christ!**

What you long for in the pursuit of riches and prosperity but can never find, can be found abundantly in Christ!

And when He becomes the center of your life it changes everything because you have all that you need...

Is Jesus at the center of your life? If not then you need to surrender to Him today, you need to start right there... You need to receive the riches of Christ... Your life will end one day, the question is will you spend eternity paying for your sin, or will you enjoy God for eternity because Jesus paid for your sin??

There is a final application that I want to spend the rest of our time on, and it’s this:

Our lives are to be characterized like this: **We respond to Jesus by being rich toward God, and not toward ourselves.**

When Jesus is at the center of your life that it redirects your priorities!

It’s in **Verse 21**, in Jesus’ summary of where it all went wrong He says: **“That’s how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”**

This man wasn’t rich toward God, because Jesus **wasn’t** at the center of His life...

Ok, so let’s look at this, what does it mean to be rich toward God?

John Piper defines it like this: *Being rich toward God is the opposite of treating the self as though it were made for things and not for God.*

- “Rich toward God” means counting God greater riches than anything on the earth. “Rich toward God” means using earthly riches to show how much you value God. This is what the prosperous farmer failed to do. And the result was that he was a fool and lost his soul.

Did you get that: Being rich toward God means using earthly riches to show how much you value God...

Is that true for you??? I want to talk a little bit and help you evaluate this in your life...

There’s a book called **God and Money**, that was written by two Harvard Business School guys who became Christians, and from that, it changed the way that they’d ever thought about money...

In one part of the book, they talk about the *money-mindset* of people.

They said when it comes to money, people tend to have one of **3 different relationships:**

As I read these descriptions, try to identify which one is you... ***Or if it describes the person next to you just start elbowing them, I’m kidding.***

A Spender: someone who believes that money’s greatest value is adding enjoyment today, they live in the moment, like immediate

satisfaction... They may be mindful that they need to save, but they get caught up in spending money on the pleasures of today.

A Saver: someone who thinks money's greatest value is security for tomorrow. They strive to limit consumption as they focus on increased wealth accumulation. *Accumulation now creates freedom later.*

A Servant, (*steward is how we would say it*) someone who sees money as a temporary gift from God that's to be used as a tool... They orient their life around limiting both consumption and wealth-building, focusing instead on giving the most money they can toward blessing other people.⁵

Which one are you??

Which one characterizes you? What are your tendencies?

Listen, I'm not saying that we **shouldn't save money, you should! And I am not saying you **shouldn't** spend money on your needs and even some pleasures and some convinces... That's fine! **

What I'm saying is we can't look to money to be our **satisfaction** (*spender*) or our **security** (*saver*)... **True life** can't be found in either of those... We can't let riches become tied to our heart... Which means that we have to take times like this and evaluate where our heart really is!

Instead we have to see money as a temporary tool given to you by God to be used for His kingdom and not yours!⁶

Everything that you have, has been given to you by God, you are a steward not an owner... **You're a servant with your things, not a master of your things...**

⁵ Ibid (Kindle Locations 1776-1789).

⁶ Adapted from JD Greear, sermon: *Live as if Jesus rules and eternity is real..*

And faithful stewardship is **leveraging** everything you have for God's glory!

So, if you wanna build "**bigger barns**" go for it, so long as you plan on using it to leveraging it for God's Kingdom and not yours... Whatever **barns** that you build in this life, **should be used to show that God is your greatest treasure...** If it **takes away** from that in the slightest, then you shouldn't build them...

- If you're itching to build a "barn" ... *if you can put it right up the road here so that we could meet in on the weekends and leverage as a missional hub that would be great!*

It's one thing to acknowledge Jesus is Lord, it is another thing to actually live that way in everyday life, especially when it comes to our finances...

What does how you spend your money say about where your heart is? Because the reality is, where your heart is determines where you spend eternity, whether your condemned or welcomed in to God's kingdom...

We've said this before but money is a root idol that fuels so many other idols in our lives... That's why Jesus talks about it so much! And the way that we combat the idolatry of money, and increase our faith, and dependence in God is through generosity!

Which is why we say all the time that **God doesn't want generosity from us, He wants it for us...**

We are all rich, the question is, what will we do with those riches?

I want to leave you with some very **practical application** in light of our text this morning when it comes to what you do with your riches...

Here are some places you can start:

A. Giving

This is one of the greatest ways to help orient our heart... Giving also increases our dependence on God by letting go of the of our dependence on money- we do that by giving...

Where do I give?... What we see in the NT is giving through the church... doesn't mean you don't give outside of the church, it just means that that should come secondary to giving to the church...

- Also, if more people in America gave to the local church we could just about fund all the other ministries!

How much do I give?

- OT giver vs NT giver... *30 something % verse 100%*
- *The question really isn't how much should I give, but how much should I keep...*
- But according to **Malachi 3:10**, **10%** is a great place to start- Jesus affirms this in Luke Chapter 11, But the NT pushes this way further...
- **Jesus doesn't want money out of your wallet He wants idols out of our hearts...**

But it is way less about an amount and more about a dependence and a heart position... The way I like to define how much to give based on the NT is give until you feel it...

- For many, and most 10% is not enough, for others they need to start with 2% or 5%... Again, it's more about the heart and about the sacrifice...
- I think the reason Jesus didn't give us a direct number is because we'd be too quick to check a box!

Your generosity fuels everything we do as a body...

B. Leveraging you House/Apartment

- Hosting community group/hangouts
- Missional opportunities...
- Neighbors
- Place for someone to live...
 - Has happened several times this year in our church...

C. Providing Meals

- Serving people by providing a meal...
- Meal train... For those inside and out of the church...

D. Meeting various needs within the church

- Example: Acts 4:32-37
- What do you have that other people need that you can provide... Might mean sacrifice- that's ok!
 - Ex. 2 cars given away this year...
- Giving above your local church giving to other missions opportunities...

E. Leveraging you job for missional means

- Internships... You professional skills- tying with the church...

How can you leverage your riches in this life for something greater that happens after this life??

Conclusion [VAMP]

Jesus' life of voluntary poverty culminating in an early death demonstrates an alternative to the American Dream. His resurrection and ascension demonstrate that the only way up in God's kingdom is down.⁷

Watch out that your heart doesn't become tied to the things of this world— Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also... Is Jesus your treasure and the center of your heart?

How do you need to respond to Him today?...
Repent/believe...PRAY

⁷ Docent research, Ryan David Hawk. 11/5/2018

Outtake:

The “all in” life of Christianity means that all of our being, all of our resources, all of our life is a blessing from God to be used for His Kingdom. ...

I want to give you a little quiz to help you figure it out⁸... Grab a pen (or your phone) because I want you to put down your answer...

I am going to ask you a question and then I am going to give you 3 possible answers: A, B, C... Write down the letter that you choose...

Be honest, we're in church...

1. Which of these excites you more?

- A four-star vacation across Europe.
- Maxing out all retirement accounts for the year.
- Dinner with your pastor, who expresses heartfelt thanks for your sacrificial support of a successfully launched, new ministry.

2. When you were a child, what was your *tendency** with new money you received?

- To buy new toys or spend on experiences as soon as you got it.
- To save it in a piggy bank or savings account.
- To spend on or give to others, your church, or charities.

3. You hear about a man who, at 70, has managed his middle-class income through meager living and careful savings, with a current net worth of \$8 million. Your *first* thought is:

- What a waste! Spending it would have been more fun!
- Wow, he really did well. I hope I can do that, too.
- He may have missed some key opportunities to experience the joy of generosity.

4. Success looks like...

- Experiencing great food and travel, living comfortably, and driving a luxury car.
- Retiring at 50.
- Extending payoff of your mortgage and forgoing some luxuries in order to sponsor a missionary family.

5. Your annual bonus is twice as much as you thought it would be.

What do you *first* think?

- I'm headed out shopping/on a vacation.
- I'm putting this on the mortgage!
- Thank God for this provision. I can't wait to give a chunk of this away.

6. The spending in my life is:

- Effortless—I love it.
- Bothersome—I wish I could spend less.
- Controlled—I feel good about the way it's managed.

7. The saving in my life is:

- Bothersome—It's an inconvenience that gets in the way of having fun.
- Effortless—I love building wealth.
- Purposeful—I have healthy and reasonable goals toward which I'm carefully working. Beyond that, I plan to give all excess away.

8. The giving in my life is:

- Obligatory.
- Formulaic.
- Joyfully overflowing.

Ok, take a look at your answers, do you see a pattern?? Here's the answer key:

- **A** corresponds to a Spender
- **B** corresponds to a Saver
- **C** corresponds to a Servant

⁸ Ibid (Kindle Locations 1813-1837).