

The Parable of the Rich Fool



Luke 12:13-21

- Review Lessons Taught:
- In Matthew 13:10, Jesus began using parables to teach about the kingdom of heaven. His disciples noticed the change in His method of teaching, and asked Him the question, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”
- According to Mark 4:34, “Jesus did not say anything to them without using a parable and when He was alone with His disciples He would explain what He meant.”
- Purpose: to assist us in growing in our understanding by exploring these divine truths found in Christ’s teaching. To teach us what they mean and how they relate to our present and future life in Christ Jesus.
- Objective: To teach us what they mean and how they relate to our present and future life in Christ Jesus.
- Goal: to allow the Holy Spirit speak to our hearts and draw us closer to Jesus Christ.

1. What is a parable?

- It is a simple yet powerful story that Jesus used to illustrate a great truth. Jesus used parables to help His followers understand spiritual truths.
- The word “parable” is taken from the Greek word that literally means to cast or throw alongside.
- Parables were stories that were “cast or thrown” alongside a truth in order to illustrate a divine truth.

2. These are the parables that have been taught:

- The Parable of the Sower. (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23)
- The Parable of the Wheat and The Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30)
- The Parable of the Mustard Seed. (Matthew 13:31-32)
- The Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33, Luke 13:20-21)
- The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)
- The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price” (Matthew 13:45-46)
- The Parable of the Dragnet
- The Parable of the Wineskins
- The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:12-26)

The Parable of the Rich Fool

Luke 12:13-21

- Before Jesus gives this parable of the rich fool, He had just finished preaching three powerful sermons to an innumerable crowd that had gathered to hear Him. (Luke 12:1-12)
 - (vs. 1-3) – Beware of hypocrisy.
 - (vs. 4-7) – The Fear of God.
 - (vs. 8-12) – Confessing Christ before Men.
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- There are (3) important areas we will examine in this parable:
 1. The Request. (vs. 13-15)
 2. The Reflection. (vs. 16-19)
 3. The Requirement. (vs. 20-21)
 - The First thing we must examine the “Request” in this parable. (vs. 13)
 1. A man from the crowd “requests” for Jesus to give a judicial decision. (vs. 13)
 - a. The man had heard Jesus preaching and perceive that He was a man of great authority.
 - b. The man called Jesus, “Teacher.”
 - This was a common practice among “Rabbis or Teachers” to settle legal disputes among the Jewish people.
 - c. The man had a dispute against his brother over the inheritance that was left to them.
 2. Jesus gives a very forceful response by quickly refusing the man’s request. (vs. 14)
 - “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” (vs. 14)
 - There are (3) three things that Jesus exposes by His response to the man.
 - 1) Jesus exposes the man’s focus. (John 4:34, Luke 2:41-50, John 9:4-5)
 - The man’s focus was on worldly matters and not Kingdom matters.

- a. The Jews believed that the true Messiah's kingdom was as earthly kingdom. (John 18:28-36)
 - b. Jesus' mission in coming to the world was to bring salvation and eternal life to all who believe on His name. (John 5:24, 6:47-51)
 - c. Jesus did not come seeking political power and earthly rule. He came to seek and to save that which is lost. (Luke 19:10, Mark 10:45)
 - d. Jesus is God in flesh reconciling the world unto Himself. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)
 - The man wanted Jesus to get involved in worldly affairs. (vs. 13)
- 2) Jesus exposes the man's motives.
- The man's reasoning for coming to Jesus had nothing to do with learning and growing in a healthy relationship with Christ.
 - The man was preoccupied with his own selfish motives that he failed to hear and receive Jesus Christ teaching about hypocrisy, fear of God, and the Holy Spirit. (vs. 1-12)
- 3) Jesus exposes the man's attitude. (Mark 8:34-38)
- Jesus was there to offer this man abundant life and life eternal in God's heavenly Kingdom. (John 10:10, 6:40)
 - Jesus understood that the man's greatest need was not physical or material, but most of all spiritual.
 - Jesus discerned the heart and attitude of the man who clearly had no interest in Him or His message, but his own selfish desire.
 - The man wanted to use Jesus' authority to serve his selfish desire or interest.
- 1) He had no interest in serving Jesus Christ and fulfilling His purpose.
 - 2) He had no interest in glorifying and honoring God with his life.
 - 3) He was distracted by temporal worldly matters.
 - 4) The man's worldly affairs and desires became a greater interest than the interest of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and having the right to eternal life.
 - This is true among some saints, who only want to use Jesus' name and authority to meet a selfish desire or interest in their lives.
 - 1) They want all the blessings and benefits but without relationship and commitment.

- 2) They want their demands met, but without following the commands of Jesus Christ and his Word.
- 3) They only come or turn to God when there is a great need or crisis in their lives, but with no true interest in receiving Jesus Christ and serving God's Kingdom purposes.

3. Jesus gives a very strong and direct warning to everyone. (vs. 15)

- (vs. 15) – “Jesus said to them (not just to the man only), “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

1) Jesus warns about the dangers of greed and covetousness.

- a. The word “take heed” mean to watch out or give close attention to.
- b. The word “beware” mean to be on your guard, to watch carefully, or guard oneself against.
- c. The word “covetousness” means a craving, a desire for more. (2 Peter 2:12-17)
 - It is greed or greediness, a dissatisfaction with what is enough.
 - It also includes such craving for both material and fleshly gratifications.
 - It is desiring what belongs to others.
 - It is the constant love for more; give me more; or I need more. Never satisfied.
 - It is a deep lust for gain; a passion for the pleasure of things and the emotional thrills that it brings.
- The Bible warns against covetousness and greed in both the Old and New Testament.
 - God warns of its sinful nature in the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:17)
 - Jesus warns by stating, “You can't serve two masters.” (Matthew 6:24-25, 16:26-27)
 - Paul warns by stating, “No fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Ephesians 5:1-5, Colossians 3:1-6)

4. Jesus saw the danger of covetousness and the negative impact it can have spiritually on the entire crowd, including His disciples and not for the man only. (vs. 15)
 - “Jesus tells us, “Life does not consist in possessions.” (vs. 15)
- 1) The rich man was complaining to Jesus about the consumption of greed and covetousness in his brother’s heart while failing to acknowledge the same was in his heart also.
- 2) Jesus warns that the greed or covetousness can affect everyone in the world and in the church regardless of what their status or background in life is.
- 3) There is no greater fulfillment for mankind than to be saved and have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and fulfilling His purpose for their lives.
- 4) True fulfillment in this life is Not.
 - Being happy and have a life of comfort and ease.
 - Being rich or wealthy.
 - Having an abundance of possessions (finest cars, houses, clothes).
 - Church activities, programs, or religious ceremonies and traditions of men.
 - Having high positions, prestige, or power.
 - Having our name being seen and known around the world.
 - All these may give you a sense of accomplishment, but not true fulfillment.
- Paul warns young Timothy that godliness and contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:6-10)
- 1) Notice Paul says, godliness accompanied with contentment is great gain. (vs.6)
 - a. He didn’t accompany godliness with complaining or complacency.
 - b. He stated that it was a great gain or profitable in everything that pertains to both this life and eternal life.
 - c. He directs our attention to the stages of life. (vs. 7-8)
 - At birth and death – “We entered into the world naked and nothing can be taken with us when we leave this world.” (Job 1:21)
 - Between birth and death – “We do need the necessities life (food, shelter and clothing).”

- d. He is teaching us to be content with the things that you have. Be content with the blessings that God has already provided in your life.
 - Not comparing yourself to what others have.
 - Not complaining about what you don't have.
 - Not being complacent where you are.
- 2) Paul warns about those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare. (vs. 9)
 - a. It also leads a person into many foolish and harmful lust traps set by the enemy (Satan).
 - b. It plunges a person further into ruin which leads to destruction and perdition (eternal perishing or damnation).
- 3) Paul states that the love of money is the root of all evil. (vs. 10, Hebrews 13:5)
 - a. Money is not evil. Money takes on the character and behavior of the person who possesses it.
 - b. It is the love of money. It is the evil desires and craving (greed) for it that leads a person to stray from their faith in Jesus Christ and pursue after it.
 - c. It is this kind of ungodly pursuit that leads to many sorrows (grief, depression, and frustration).
- 4) The word "contentment" means to be spiritual whole, complete, fulfilled, sufficient and satisfied.
 - a. It describes a person who is spiritually fulfilled in their relationship in Jesus Christ.
 - b. The person no longer looks to the world or material gain to bring fulfilment to their life.
 - c. The person is godly and find contentment (satisfied, complete, fulfilment) in whatever state they are in. (Philippians 4:11-13)
 - d. The person who lives a godly life before the Lord will be content and lack absolutely nothing regardless of the circumstances.
 - They genuinely love and trust God as their source and provider. (Proverbs 3:5, Psalm 34:1-3, 8)
 - They know that God is always working things out for their good. (Romans 8:28)

- They know that God is for them and not against them. (Romans 8:31, 1 John 4:4)
5. The true disciple of Jesus Christ has something much greater than happiness; we have the joy of the Lord. (John 15:9-12, 1 Peter 1:3-9)
- The joy of being known by God through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (John 17:3, 11-15)
 - The joy of knowing that one day when my work is finished down here in the earth that I will be called home to spend eternity with my Heavenly Father. (1 Corinthians 15:51-58, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8)
 - The joy of knowing that if I serve and fulfill God's will I can have a good journey in this life and the eternal life to come. (1 John 1:2-4)
6. When a person begins to prioritize the physical and material things in life above the spiritual (personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ). (Matthew 6:31-33)
- God knows you have need of things such as shelter, food, and clothing.
 - Worrying about material things only make us more discontent and dissatisfied with life.
 - By prioritizing our spiritual need which is being in Jesus Christ and His righteousness, all the things that we need will be taken care of. (Philippians 4:19-20)
 - The priority of every person should be rich toward God and not the world.
 - Life is about us bringing glory and honor to God. It about growing and maturing in our relationship with Jesus Christ and fulfilling His will in the earth. (1 John 2:15-17)
- The Second thing we must examine is the "Reflection" in this parable. (vs. 16)
1. Jesus had just warned them to "watch out and be on guard against" all kinds of covetousness or greed. (vs. 15)

2. Jesus spoke a parable to them about a rich man to further illustrate how covetousness or greed can distort our focus and derail our priorities toward God. (vs. 16-19)

1) Jesus reveals that the man was already a rich farmer who continue to accumulated great riches from his crops. (vs. 16)

2) Jesus reveals that the self-centered rich man began to “reflect” on (3) things. (vs. 17-19)

1. The Problem. (vs. 17)

a. His thoughts were selfishly motivated and not once did he ask God for wisdom and direction in the matter. (Proverbs 23:7)

b. His thoughts were filled with pride and not once did he consider that it was God who blessed him. (Proverbs 16:18-19, Psalm 10:3-4, Proverbs 10:22)

• He gave no thought of God at all. God became an afterthought.

c. His thoughts were self-centered and not once did he consider that what he possessed did not belong to him, but it belong to God. (Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 10:14, Psalm 24:1-2, 50:10-11, Haggai 2:8, Isaiah 45:18)

d. His thoughts were consumed by what he possessed materially. Instead of having dominion over it, he allowed it to dominate his life.

2. The Plan. (vs. 18)

a. His plans were made without the counsel of God. (Proverbs 19:21, James 1:5-8)

b. His plans were based upon what he could do. He forgot who God is and what God had already done. (Deuteronomy 8:11-20, Proverbs 3:5-8, 10:22)

c. His plans were to build greater, but without the God who is greater and bigger than anyone or anything in this world. (Psalm 95:1-7, 104, 145:1-13, 147:1-11, 1 John 4:4)

d. His plans were reflected by what he believed about himself and God. (Proverbs 21:29-30)

- He foolishly believed that true success in life was based upon himself and the material things he possessed in the world. (James 4:1-6)
- He quickly took on the ways and views of the world. “I have what I need, therefore, I no longer need God for anything.” (Revelation 3:14-17)
- He failed to realize that true success in life is about pleasing and glorifying God in everything.