

## THE RICH MAN AND HIS BARN

This study is based on *Luke 12:13-21*, “13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? 15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

1. **The parable only begins in verse 16 until verse 21. From verses 13 to 15 what do we see taking place?**
  - A man comes up to Jesus and tells him to speak to his brother.
  - Why? Because it seems like they are arguing over their parents inheritance.
  - Jesus wants no part to do with that. That's not the reason why He came to earth, to deal with a family's inheritance issue.
  - However, Jesus does not stop there. He continues to speak and give us a clue as to the reason why He gives the parable.
  - In verse 15, what does Jesus warn us about? Covetousness.
  - Why? Because a man's life is not about the abundance of things he possesses. Obviously he is answering this man's plea for help because they are fighting over the inheritance.
  
2. **What is covetousness?**
  - This parable helps us to see what covetousness is in a different light.
  - But first, what is our typical understanding of what covetousness is?
  - If I see your phone and I like it and go out and buy the exact same phone, am I being covetous? No.
  - If I see your car and I like it and go out and buy the exact same care, am I being covetous? No.
  - Then what is covetousness?
  - It is taking whatever is other people's and wanting it as yours. We get this clue when we go to the 10 commandments.

- *Exodus 20:17*

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

- The key in this verse is coveting our neighbour's wife. You can't see your neighbour get married and you like his wife so you go out and get the same wife. There's no such thing as the same wife in the whole world, unless you get your neighbour's wife.
- Covetousness is when we see someone else's belongings and we don't go out and buy the same thing, but we end up stealing it from that person, or killing that person for their phone, or committing adultery with our neighbour's wife.
- Covetousness is not keeping up with the trend, getting the latest things. There is nothing wrong with that.
- Covetousness is a really hard sin to detect because it usually results in us breaking another commandment. We kill someone or lie to someone or steal from someone for that object that we want.
- To hurt your character and break the law to get it, then it becomes covetousness.
- So Jesus uses the rest of the parable to illustrate about covetousness, at the same time telling the brothers not to be so covetous because life is not about what you own.

**3. So let's look at the parable now. Who is the main character in the parable?**

- There is only one person in this parable. It is the rich man.

**4. And what happens to this rich man?**

- It seems like God blesses this rich man.
- The ground brings forth plentifully. He gets even richer! So much so that he has no room left to store his riches.
- So what does he do? He goes out, tears down his existing barns and builds greater barns so he has room to store everything.
- He sounds like a person that is about to retire early, but it sounds bad.
- Seems like we shouldn't acquire wealth and retire early.
- Is that what this parable is talking about? Let's dig a bit deeper.

**5. What is wrong with money?**

- *1 Timothy 6:10*

*For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

- There is nothing wrong with being rich if you haven't erred from the faith.

- But most people that are rich have sold some part of their soul to the world.
- Maybe they broke the law, get involved in alcohol, drugs, cut some corner that they know they shouldn't cut because it goes against the Bible.

**6. What happens to rich people? What makes money so dangerous?**

- *1 Timothy 6:9*

*But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

- Those that are rich fall into temptation, become foolish and get into hurtful lusts (desires) that end up destroying them.

**7. What is the opposite of this?**

- *1 Timothy 6:6-7*

*6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

- Godliness with contentment is great gain.
- Opposite of covetousness is contentment.
- To be content means that you are satisfied with the current situation, and can be thankful for it.
- This doesn't mean you should be content with living under a bridge in a cardboard box. You could be thankful that at least you have a cardboard box and work towards getting a house instead of stealing it from someone else or killing someone for it.
- We brought nothing into this world and we won't be bringing anything away with us.
- It is similar to *Luke 12:20* - if your life comes to an end now, who then will these things belong to? The government? Your family? Your spouse? No one?
- Certainly it will belong to everyone else but you.
- So then why do we work so hard for this? Just to die with nothing?
- What's going to happen to the millions that you earn when you die? It will be given away to your children, to your family, or even to strangers.
- Why don't you do something good with it when you can now, when you are still alive?

**8. What does the Bible say about those that are rich?**

- *Matthew 19:23*

*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

- It is hard for a rich man to enter into heaven.
- Why? The problem is not about being rich but it's when you are reluctant to give it up to follow God.

- This was the problem of the rich young ruler in this chapter when Jesus asked him to follow Him.
- *Matthew 19:21-22*  
*21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.*
- Sometimes the more we have the harder it is to let go.
- The problem is not about being rich but it's when you are reluctant to give up your riches to follow God.
- That is something that we all have to be so careful of. Even if you earn less you can still be covetous.
- You could value your iPad more than a rich man values his Bentley. Let's not think that this is just referring to those that are literally rich and rolling in money.

**9. What did the rich man do that made him covetous?**

- He laid up treasure for himself and he is not rich towards God.
- There is nothing wrong with wanting to expand his barn, but he was selfish. He wanted to keep all the treasures to himself. Hoarding it and keeping it.
- There is nothing wrong if your corresponding riches are also used to bless others.
- When your riches increase personally, make sure your riches towards God increase as well. But the rich man was only thinking about himself.
- We need to be rich towards God as well. Give back to God too.

**10. What does it mean to be rich towards God?**

- Let's start with actual money. Make sure when you give to God that you work on percentages. So as your riches increase, then your giving will increase as well.
  - 10% tithe and 10% offering.
- *1 Timothy 6:17*  
*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*
  - God is the one that gives riches and all things to enjoy.
  - We got to keep this in mind. But let's continue.
- *1 Timothy 6:18*  
*That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;*
  - As a result, we should do good, be rich in good works, and be ready to distribute.
  - We should be ready to give to people in need. We should come with money ready to give to the Lord's work.

- **1 Timothy 6:19**  
*Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*
  - Lay up a good foundation.
- With the little that you have, help somebody. We are too caught up with our own lives that we just want to get ahead. We don't think of using the extra money that we have to help others, and that's when covetousness comes in.
- Maybe you don't give money away, but be willing to use your resources for the service of God. Your car, your house, your means, your computer. Things that you buy for yourself, let it be used as a blessing for others too!
- Do something that you can bless people materially. Learn to be a blessing to everybody.

#### **11. What then is the biggest problem of our covetousness?**

- **Matthew 6:19-21**  
*19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*
- The biggest issue is about our hearts. Where is it? Is it focused on earth or in heaven?
- The 3 things that are listed that can destroy our possessions covers everything!
  - Moth - destroys paper, clothes, couch, bed.
  - Rust - destroys everything metal such as electronics, cars.
  - Thief - will take everything else!
- Everything will be destroyed! Why do we work so hard for it, and why do we covet it so much?
- The biggest problem is where our heart is. What it is focused on. We need to re-focus.

So let us remember the following:

- **Acts 20:35**  
*I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*
  - It is more blessed to give than to receive. So easy to hear but so hard to do.  
Why? Because our hearts are on earth and not focused on heaven.
- **Philippians 3:8**  
*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*
  - Let's count everything but dung just so that we can win Christ.

- The basis of this is our heart problem - where we put our hearts.
- If we count everything but loss just so we can gain the knowledge of Christ, we will aim to live His life. Our priorities will be different.
- Jesus was never a rich man on Earth, but He still gave so much. How? His heart was in heaven.

It's not that you're doing anything bad, it's just that you get too busy with 'things' that you forget about God. You are not choosing to spend time with God. Riches can change the priorities in your life, and that is when you become covetous. Why? Because you worked so hard to gain it, you don't want to lose it, your priorities change and your character changes. The question is are you still the same faithful servant of God when you are rich?

**12. How can we stop be so covetous? We got to count all things as dung just so that we can win Christ.**

- *Psalms 119:36*  
*Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*
  - This is the sort of priorities we must have now before riches take hold of us.
  - The testimonies are the scriptures, it is the testimony of the prophets.
  - Keep your heart in the scriptures. That must be our priority!
- *Matthew 6:33*  
*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
  - Seek God FIRST and then the rest will be added unto you.
- It is not about the fact that the man feels prospered, but what does he do with it?
- Do the possessions that you have only bless you? If yes, then are you and your life a blessing to others? Remember, God is the one that prospered you in the beginning.
- Think of how you can be rich towards God and be a blessing to others.
- Incline your ear to the testimonies and God will show you how you can be a blessing to others. He will open the doors for you to be that blessing.
- And with Jesus as your foundation, you can be assured that you will not fall into the trap of covetousness.