

Parable of the Rich Fool

Stories to Be Shaped by—part 5

Luke 12:13-21; April 24, 2016

DAY 1: A horribly wrong assumption about life

1. The setting for our parable has thousands of people trying to get to Jesus. They are trampling on one another. On the other end of the spectrum is a group of Pharisees who are looking for a way to torpedo Jesus.

2. Jesus is teaching the crowd some heavy things! He publicly warns the people against the teaching of the Pharisees, He teaches about the realities of heaven and hell, and He teaches about the wonders of forgiveness and the perils of the unpardonable sin.

3. It is then that he is interrupted by a man who is afraid of losing out on an inheritance.

Luke 12:13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

4. Imagine you are at a Billy Graham crusade or a Greg Laurie crusade. Billy and Greg are teaching about some of the most important issues in all of life. Suddenly, a random guy walks up on the podium and makes the demand that this man makes. What would you think about that man? What's important to him? What does his interruption tell you about him?

Luke 12:14 Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"

5. Why do you think Jesus responds the way He does?

6. No response from the man is recorded. Instead, Jesus takes the opportunity to address the crowd, with another serious issue, and a warning.

Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possession."

7. What does Jesus "see" in the man?

8. What assumption(s) about life is the man making?

9. Would Jesus give the same warning to you?

DAY 2: How the rich man saw life.

1. Jesus takes the opportunity to tell the crowd this parable.

Luke 12:16 And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop.

2. What would be your first **thought** when you realized you had had a good harvest? What would you have then **done**?

Luke 12:17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'
¹⁸ *"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.*

3. What was the rich man's response? What did he neglect to do? Neglect to think?

Luke 12:19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."

4. Now we get a look at the inside of the man! What did the man really believe about each of the following?

a. Security in the present?

b. Security in the long term?

c. Based on his "security" what did he see as his "purpose?"

5. How would you answer each of the same questions? What do you really believe about each of the following?

a. Security in the present?

b. Security in the long term?

c. What is your real purpose?

DAY 3: Are you a wise man or a fool?

1. If you could have asked the rich man how his life was going how would he have answered? Why?

Luke 12:20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

2. The hammer falls. First, God calls the rich man, "Fool!" When people call someone a "fool" they usually use it as a term of contempt, a putdown. But in the Old Testament, "fool" is a technical term!

3. The "fool" in the Old Testament is the person who

a. Lives as if God does not exist, and

b. Lives as if God has not spoken.

c. His life centers around filling himself, his way, by his "power," and because "he deserves it."

How do you see these traits in the rich man?

4. There are different kinds of "fools." Here are a few...

a. The "Easy Way" fool. This is the naïve, simpleton,

b. The "My Way" fool. This one drives his life and relationships with the belief that he has to be in control; things need to be done his way.

c. The "Fun Way" fool. The person has a hard time taking things seriously. His purpose is to feel better now.

5. Which of these "fools" fits closest to the rich man? Why?

Luke 12:21 "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

6. Jesus spells out why He called the rich man a "fool." What strikes you about v. 21?

7. Do you see any traits of the "fool" in yourself? Which ones?

8. Finish today's devotional asking God to turn your foolishness into wisdom.

DAY 4: A closer look at our native foolishness

Luke 12:17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

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Luke 12:19 And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

Luke 12:20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

1. Jesus identifies three traits of our native foolishness. The first is our selfishness. We naturally revolve our lives around ourselves, first.

a. Go back over these verses. Put a circle around every word that is “I,” and “my.”

b. How many circles did you make? What strikes you about the circles, representative of the rich man’s innate selfishness?

2. The second trait of foolishness is materialism. Materialism is the drive to have more as a priority issue, believing that the material can bring lasting satisfaction and/or happiness. How do you see this in the rich man? (vv. 18-19)

3. The third trait of foolishness is hedonism. Hedonism is driven by the belief that nothing matters more than feeling better now. It is the pursuit of pleasure, and the feelings it produces as highest priority. How do you see this trait in v. 19?

4. As you think about these three traits: selfishness, materialism, and hedonism, which of these resonates with you the most? How do you see it lived out in your decisions, thoughts, or actions?

DAY 5: Becoming “rich toward God”

1. Just before Jesus spoke the parable of the rich man, he gave a warning to the crowd. Let’s look back at it.

Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possession."

2. What is the danger?

3. Greed is the consuming desire for more. It implies a grasping, a lust to get. The belief behind greed is that whatever “more” I’m pursuing is what I most need. The point of greed is not “amount” but “attitude” or the belief that drives it.

4. What “belief” did Jesus point out about the rich man? (v. 15)

5. In what ways do you see greed in your attitude, belief, or approach to life? (Look back at question 3)

Luke 12:21 "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

6. The end of the parable describes the contrasting way of life between this rich man who stores up things for himself vs. being “rich toward God.” What do you think Jesus means by being “rich toward God”?

7. The rich man built his life around what mattered least and what he could never take with him into eternity. The man “rich toward God” builds his life around what matters most and what he can take with him into eternity to enjoy through all eternity!

8. We become rich toward God by living for the purposes of God:

- a. As our highest priority,
- b. Allowing our lives to be used in advancing God’s purpose in others,
- c. Accomplished through the investments we make with our money, time, and relationships.

9. What would you like to do as a result of today’s devotional?

