

Sunday Sermon: August 25, 2019

Sermon Text: Luke 12:13-21

Sermon Theme: Treasures in Heaven

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

¹⁴Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” ¹⁵Then 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 possessions.”

¹⁶And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷He 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. ¹⁹And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’

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?’

²¹“This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”

Four friends were talking about their big hopes and dreams for life. The first man said, “I have always had my eye on getting the first car I had in high school. I will know I have made it when I get that car, restore it, and can drive down the road like I did then.”

The second man said, “When I make my first million I will know that I have been successful. I know that as long as I keep working toward that goal, then I will be on the right track.”

The third man said, “I want to have enough in retirement so that I do whatever I want. I am working so hard now, so that I can take it easy then.”

The fourth man said, “My goal in life is to make it heaven. I know that Jesus has died for me and has given me such a great gift. I know that the Holy Spirit is working in my heart to keep me firm in the faith. My goal is to be with Jesus one day.”

The other men looked at him blankly and then started to laugh at him. He looked back at them and said, “Your car will break down, it will rust, it will get dirty, or you might get into an accident. Then what will you have. Heaven will always be the same amazing place forever.”

“You may never reach your first million. You may make all the right choices and do the right thing, but you may never make. I know I will make it to heaven because Jesus has won it for me and gives it to me. There’s no if there.”

“You may never get the chance to enter retirement. Maybe you will have enough, maybe you will die before you can use it. Then what will happen to all your hard work. I know whenever I meet Jesus, he will welcome me with open arms into his kingdom.”

Life is like our little story here. We often have goals and strive to meet those goals. We all have our own ideas what success looks like. There is nothing wrong with the goals that we make as long as we always have our eyes on the most important goal that is before us: the goal of heaven. If anything takes us away from that goal; money, possessions, family, we aren’t storing up treasures in heaven. As Jesus said to Martha, there is one thing that is needed, one thing that we should strive for. In our text today Jesus tells us to strive for more than our earthly possessions he tells us to Store up Treasures in Heaven by being rich towards God.

Our sermon text is part of a much larger sermon that Jesus preached over a few chapters of Luke. It seems that while he was preaching to this large crowd, someone interrupted him with his question about inheritance. **“Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”**

The Jews used their rabbis for many things. One of the things that they used them for was to settle disputes like this. They would act like an arbitrator, listen to the story and give a verdict. Although Jesus was not an official rabbi, because he taught with the power and authority of God, many recognized him and treated him as a religious teacher and even called him Rabbi.

Jesus’ answer shows that he is much more concerned that the man has not listened to his teachings than he was about the inheritance and taking care of his problem. **Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter**

between you?" 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 possessions."

This man had come out of greed. He wanted his part of the inheritance and he wanted it now that he was willing to interrupt Jesus' teaching to get what he wanted. It is clear where his heart was. He was not focused on God or eternity, he was only focused on himself and the money he thought he should have. Jesus tells the parable to point out that although earthly things seem important to us, there is something that is so much more important that we should be striving for.

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

This story almost sounds like the American dream doesn't it? It sounds like a story that we would all want as part of our life. We would want to be successful, so successful, that we need to build bigger in order to accommodate it all. We want to reach the point in life where we can retire and take it easy, rather than working so long hours and hard years

And.... there is nothing wrong with wanting those things as long as we keep them in the proper perspective of our life, by saying, Eat, drink and be merry, in his heart, the man showed that his heart was not in the right place with God.

This man's sin was not that he worked hard for what he got. His sin was not that he had managed his farm and livelihood in a way that was successful, his sin was not making the most out of the gifts and abilities that he had in his life.

The man's sin was in his heart. His sin was living for himself and felt that he was the one who was solely responsible for all that he had. His sin was in thinking that he, alone, deserved the praise for what he had done. He had no faith which would spend time in the Word with the Lord.

In the same way, there is no sin for us in making wise choices with our money, accepting a raise, saving money, buying goods or even getting a good job so that we can have some comforts.

Our sin can also be in our hearts. Like the foolish man, we can sit back and praise ourselves for all the things we have done and accomplished with no thought of thanking the God who gave it.

In our life, we will never have one more or less thing than what God wants us to have. No amount of work or stress or striving is going to change that fact.

This should be a comfort to us. Although we think that we have to put pressure on ourselves to provide what we need. Our great God is already providing for us what we need.

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?'

In many ways, we would say this man was wise. He had built a successful business. But he was living by the wisdom of the world that says that some is good, more is better, and a lot is awesome. He had stored up many things on earth which he thought was the most important thing. However, he was a fool in one area and that was the area that truly matters. He had not spent time in the Word. He had not spent time listening to what his God has said. He did not believe in his God or his Savior, and he was not thankful for the gifts and blessings that God gave him.

What would all of his wealth and possessions get him in death when he was standing before Jesus in heaven? His wisdom in earthly things would mean nothing in eternity.

The apostle Paul says to Timothy, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." This is the same thing that Jesus is warning against. A love of money can open the door to the devil for many other sins like greed, selfishness, coveting and discontent. These same sins are dangers when we are only storing up for ourselves treasures on earth. Without our God in our life, we can so easily fall into these sins and find ourselves only striving for ourselves.

When Solomon said that life without God is meaningless, he knew what he was talking about. Like our introduction many of the things that we strive for in think are important will fade, can be taken away or will fail us in some way. When our life is only focused on earthly things, it is meaningless because we will always be

striving for something that we cannot get. There is only one thing, one goal that is attainable and that's because God has already given it to us through Jesus.

²¹ **“This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”**

On the day of our judgment, whether that will be when we die or on judgment day, Jesus does not care what is in our bank accounts, how many cars are in the driveway, or what kind of house we have. What will matter is faith that clings to him and him alone for the forgiveness that he gives to us and grace of God which makes the goal of heaven ours through Jesus.

We come to church, not because Jesus promises that he will make us rich for doing it. We come to church to find riches of a different kind. We come to have the riches of God poured out on sinners who don't earn or deserve it. We come to have the riches of God poured out on us when we hear that our loving Savior has taken away our sins. We come to have the riches of God poured out on us that Jesus has won heaven and has given it to us. We come to hear that the Holy Spirit continues to work through that Word to make these blessings that Jesus won of faith, forgiveness, life and salvation ours every day. We come to know that our God continues to pour even the richest of earthly blessings on us. We come to hear the Word, because we know that through that Word the Holy Spirit works to deepen our faith and make us richer towards God.

We come to have the riches of God poured out on us. We hear that in the third verse of the hymn we just sang. The world seeks after wealth And all that money offers, Yet never is content Though gold should fill its coffers. I have a higher good; Content with it I'll be; My Jesus is my wealth—What is the world to me!

It is only faith in Jesus that gives life meaning and it is only Jesus who gives the true treasure of heaven.