

Title: Seek First God's Kingdom

Text: Luke 12: 13-37

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Luke 12: 13: And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

Is there anyone here like this person? 1. Christ Jesus, the Pearl of great price, was in his midst face-to-face. The Master was declaring the riches of God's glory, the exceeding riches of God's grace, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, the unsearchable riches of Christ

Yet, this man had his mind set on a worthless earthly inheritance.

We spend all week listening to the words of men. We come here to hear the word of God. That is why I almost always begin by reading the word of God to you first. If I give an introduction it is short so we can get to the word of God. This is the word of the true and living God. We need to hear what Christ says. Now, what is your mind set on while we hear Christ speak? The Lord rebuked this man.

Luke 12: 14: And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Christ Jesus is not a temporal king. His kingdom is not of this world. This man had need of an inward work of grace which no settling of secular matters could resolve.

Therefore, Christ would not be turned from the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to this man's trivial, civil matters. Christ's business involves far more important matters than anything we deem important in this world. Eternal matters: matters of how God can be just, how he can execute fully the judgment of eternal death upon his guilty elect children for breaking his law. And yet justify his children and shower us with the mercies of his grace. The gospel is the message of the righteousness of God. Any earthly matters this book deals with are for the sole purpose of teaching us how to have no distractions from focusing our full attention on Christ and him crucified.

While this world's preachers are turned aside by every trivial matter that sinners can present to them, God's preachers follow our Master and will not be turned aside from declaring the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus which is exceedingly and preeminently more important.

The one reason this man desired to disrupt Christ's work was because his heart was filled with covetousness for silver and gold which in no way profits a sinner eternally. Therefore, Christ rebuked him sharply.

Luke 12: 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.

Instead of setting our hearts on perishing things of clay—**take heed**-listen up, pay attention with every ounce of your being-to the word of God our Savior. Nothing is more valuable than the gospel of Christ. He said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (Jn 6: 63)

And beware of covetousness. Covetousness is more dangerous than cancer. An abundance of possessions will not profit you spiritually, but they will steal your heart, eat you up and harden you so that you can never know Christ who is Life!

Illustration: Men sank with the Titanic because they would not let go of their possessions. Some here are sinking. Yet, your mind is on things that will only take you to the bottom faster. Take heed and beware of covetousness!

For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Can possessions put away your sins? Can possessions justify you before God? Can possessions make you righteous and holy and accepted of God?

God gives eternal life freely to whomsoever he will and this life is in his Son. But those he gives eternal life, were "not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold,...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet 1: 18-19) Life does not consist in possessions, life is in Christ Jesus.

Luke 12: 16: And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

Here is what a covetous heart does:

1. It steals away your thoughts from God—**V17: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?**
2. A covetous heart steals away your time from seeking Christ and his righteousness while you prepare a place to save your riches—**v18: And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater;**
3. A covetous heart steals away your generosity to your brethren for whom Christ died, as you save all for self—**v18: and there will I bestow ALL my fruits and my goods.**
4. A covetous heart steals away your faith in Christ to save you by giving you a false sense of security—**V19: 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.**
5. But that very God from whom a covetous heart turns you, can take all away in a moment—**Luke 12: 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.**

Every treasure a man can lay up for himself by the work of his own hands shall not last. Be it works of righteousness by which he expects to be justified, sanctified and accepted of God. Or the earthly possessions he obtained by the work of his own hands.

Only the riches God gives freely by his grace in Christ Jesus through faith in his Son shall never be taken away from the believer—not ever!

Mary sat at Christ's feet believing every word of her Savior? Christ said, "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Lu 10:42)

Colossians 3:4: When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Luke 12: 22: Therefore I say unto you take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. 23: The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

The Lord is not forbidding us from having good food and nice clothes. He is not forbidding a savings account. Nor is the Lord exhorting us to live in reckless abandon. The Lord is commanding his child to give Christ your primary focus in life, rather than your temporal needs. The Lord is telling his child the only way we can do so, is to cast all our care into his hands to provide for us, otherwise we won't focus on Christ for being fearful and worrying about food and raiment. The Lord is commanding his child to be content with what the Lord provides rather than seeking to have more or better than what he provides.

If Christ Jesus is truly your Bread: your Bread from heaven—God the Son; Bread freely given from your Father in heaven—by free electing grace, by free redeeming grace, by free regenerating grace, by free preserving grace—freely given; Bread which giveth life unto you—who gives eternal life to as many as the Father has given unto him, who has given you life; Bread who promises, “he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” (Jn 6: 32-40) Then there is more to your life than what you stuff in your face, your life is Christ the Bread from heaven. Therefore seek him first!

If Christ Jesus is your Raiment: the fulfillment of the law in precept and penalty—all your Righteousness; if you have been justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (Rom 3: 24); if the Spirit of God has quickened you and given faith to believe that Christ has made propitiation—atonement, pardon, reconciliation—for you (Rom 3: 25) so that right now there is no condemnation for you, because Christ has condemned death for his children by dying under the curse of the law for us. Then your life is more than the clothes on your back it is the raiment of Christ's righteousness. The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

I. WHEN IT COMES TO OUR FOOD-V24: Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Believer, you are worth much more to God than an old crow? We are no better by nature. But like the old crow is fed by God from what someone else planted and harvested so we are fed by of God by the work Christ did.

The raven does not sow. We were dead in trespasses and in sins—we had nothing to sow with. But God provides for the crow from another's hand and God has provided for us by the hand of Christ—the Seed of Abraham has been sown into our hearts. So then God shall provide temporal food: opening every door, dropping every crumb from the Master's table, he shall see to it that his seed is never found begging bread.

The old crow does not reap and by nature we could not reap—we brought forth fruit unto death. But God provides for the crow by another's hand and God has provided for us giving us the harvest Christ wrought for us—full acceptance with God—what a harvest! So Christ is able to make the harvest of temporal food to abound to meet our needs.

By nature we have no storehouses—but God feeds the crow out of his storehouse and God has feed us from his abundance of free grace.

II. CONSIDER THE HEALTH OF OUR BODIES—V25: And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

By taking thought—worrying, being anxious—can you make food nourish your body? Can you keep yourself from getting sick? Or can you add one minute to your life? No. Yet, Christ says these are matters of least difficulty for him to take care of.

Luke 12: 26: If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

He is not saying we should not take care of our bodies. We should eat good food, exercise and so on. But do not put the health of your body before the health and nourishment of your soul—feed the inner man first.

This we cannot do if we are worried over these other things. But if we must depend upon God to do that which is least, also depend upon God to do the rest. If we trust God, we can spend less time worrying about our needs, and we can focus our hearts on Christ, his word, his gospel, on walking in communion with him.

III. CONSIDER OUR RAIMENT—V27: Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

We are like the flower—“all flesh is grass.” How do wildflowers grow? They toil not and spin not—the flower does not anxiously labor and fret; they do not run about from here to there all in a tizzy, they are fixed.

The flower's beauty is not manufactured, not man-made. It is not the adorning of gold and silver and clothing but all is God given. Yet, Solomon, in all his glorious, man-made apparel could not compare with the beauty of one of the wildflowers which God adorns.

Now, if we watch the flowers throughout the day we get the Lord's point. How do they get their beauty from God? In the morning they all point east as God's sun arises with healing in his wings. At midday they all point up to soak up the light of God's sun. In the evening they all point west to get every last ray of light from God's sun.

Luke 12: 28: If then God so clothe the grass, [after this manner] which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Brethren, if you would be arrayed in true beauty, spend every waking hour looking less toward the beauty you put on by your toiling and spinning and spend more time looking to God's Son, the Lord Jesus. God's Son will adorn you freely with beauty which excels any beauty you can get from diamonds and other raiment.

1 Peter 3: 3: Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4: But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

IV. AND BE NOT LIKE THE WORLD—V29: And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30: For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

The worldly man lives to eat and drink and his mind is full of doubts and worries about earthly things. God our Father chose us in Christ to be holy from this world. God the Son poured out his blood to redeem us from the bondage of this world which is a slave to worldly things. God the Holy Spirit sanctified us from this flesh in the new birth, purging our consciences from dead worthless works of the flesh such as these. Believer, you have a Father in heaven with all power in heaven and earth and all deep places to provide everything you need. And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. So Christ says seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind like the worldling.

Luke 12: 31: But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; [Matthew wrote, “Seek ye FIRST, preeminently, the kingdom of God”] **and all these things shall be added unto you.**

In everything the Master has said this is the point: have our minds set preeminently on Christ and on his brethren—rather than coveting earthly things. And as you do, know, that God shall provide all the things you need.

Luke 12: 32: Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

We are a little flock—but we have a mighty and faithful Shepherd. It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

The man in the beginning was troubled because it was not his earthly father’s good pleasure to give him the inheritance. His father gave it all to his brother. And his brother would not divide the inheritance with him.

But our heavenly Father gave the whole inheritance to our Elder Brother Christ Jesus and it was our Father’s good pleasure for Christ to divide it all with those for whom he died---and “the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in Christ’s hand.”

Isaiah 53: 12: Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Romans 8: 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

Ephesians 1: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Do you believe God? Or are we like the rich young ruler. By his works of righteousness, he coveted Christ’s glory because Christ is the one by whose obedience his people are made righteous. And he coveted his riches more than Christ’s brethren. He loved his righteousness rather than Christ. And he loved his riches rather than Christ’s brethren. Therefore, he could not heed Christ’s command. Can we? If we believe Christ we will love our brethren. This is what we will do.

Luke 12: 33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The treasure of the believer is Christ in heaven. Our treasure in earth are those for whom Christ died, our brethren. Therefore, believing Christ has provided us all Righteousness and shall provide all lesser needs, we freely, cheerful give to help our needy brethren: for the furtherance of the gospel and for their temporal needs.

One of the ways our Lord provides our needs so we can all keep our focus on Christ is through our brethren. He always has saints believing him so as to help take care of those fretting and doubting. Thus when we are the one doubting, he makes us see that he indeed does provide. Once again he strengthens us in faith so that when that brother who helped us is in need, we can help him.

Do you see how faith and love are united together in what the Lord Jesus is teaching us?

1 John 3:23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

1 Timothy 6: 17: Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not HIGHMINDED, NOR trust in UNCERTAIN RICHES [be not highminded in the riches of self-righteousness nor trust in earthly treasure which moth and rust and thieves destroy] BUT IN THE LIVING GOD, who GIVETH us RICHLY ALL THINGS to ENJOY; 18 That they DO GOOD, that they be RICH IN GOOD WORKS, READY TO DISTRIBUTE, WILLING TO COMMUNICATE; 19: LAYING UP IN STORE FOR THEMSELVES A GOOD FOUNDATION against the time to come, that they may LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE.

Luke 12: 35: Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning; 36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. 37 Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Brethren, this is our inheritance which surpasses in value all the riches of this world combined. One day we shall sit at Christ's table in his kingdom and he will serve us. Simply put, it means we shall each one have everlasting, eternal communion with our God and Savior.

- Seek Christ first—he is the true Bread
- Seek Christ first—he is our raiment of Righteousness
- Seek Christ first—the beauty he adorns you with is better than any man-made adornment.
- Seek the good of those in need, especially those for whom Christ died.
- This is what it is to seek first the kingdom of God.
- He shall provide every other need.

May the Spirit of God make this word of our Redeemer effectual in our hearts to do his will.

Amen!