

Title: Being Rich Toward God

Text: Luke 12: 13-21

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When a believer we know passes from this life—especially if it is sudden—the news comes as a shock. We all know we will depart this life. But when one we love departs it helps us to remember that our chief priority is knowing Christ.

Yet, though it is sad for family and for friends who remain, for the believer who is rich toward God, there is only joy! This is what every believer lives for.

2 Corinthians 5: 8: We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

By the grace of God, we are confident—we are willing—because we know that immediately, when the spirit departs the body, God's saint is present with the Lord. Just think of leaving this world and awaking in the presence of the Lord. Those whose only hope is Christ have no reason to fear death or judgment. In Christ,

Psalms 116: 15: Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.

1 John 3:2...we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

It puts a smile in my heart to think of what a believer is enjoying right now who has passed from this life into the Lord's presence.

Revelation 21: 3...the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. 4: And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away...7: He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son....27: And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 22: 3: And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4: And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. 5: And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Right now, we rejoice to hear the gospel of how Christ makes all things new. But then we shall behold it, forever!

But though there is only a joyful inheritance for the believer, there is no joy to look forward to for those who depart without Christ. Therefore, today when I began to think how quickly this life can be over, the first scripture I thought of was Luke 12.

Proposition: Here the Lord Jesus Christ declares that nothing in this life shall profit us when we die, only the riches that Christ freely gives to those who believe on him.

Luke 12: 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?

Some only want earthly things from Christ: health, wealth and prosperity. Christ did not come to be a civil judge and divide men's earthly inheritance. He came for much greater matters. Christ came to glorify God in the salvation of his people from our sins.

TAKE HEED AND BEWARD

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.

When you pull in someone's drive and see a sign that says "Beware of dog"—with every step you are very cautious. Your eyes are constantly on the lookout. Any little noise and you look in that direction. That is what Christ says we are to take heed and do concerning covetousness—beware of covetousness.

Some translations read "beware of every kind of covetousness." Covetousness is having the heart set on everything except Christ alone: riches, honors, esteem. But only the new heart God gives is not covetousness. The natural heart is only covetous

We see what a covetous heart will do—this man's heart was turned completely from Christ and set on an earthly inheritance. Sadly, the sinner who does not believe on Christ, has only a covetous heart for the things of this world.

Men and women who always have excuses why they cannot give themselves to the cause of Christ will pay huge sums of money to get their children a college degree so they can make more money and get more stuff. Those who would never think of moving to be where the gospel is preached have no difficulty packing up and moving clear across the country for a job that pays well

A MAN'S LIFE

Yet, nothing of this world shall profit us spiritually and eternally—**Matthew 12: 15:...for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**

A man's earthly life is not prolonged by possessions so possessions certainly cannot give him eternal life. Possessions cannot put away our sins. Possessions cannot justify us or make us holy before God

Only Christ is Life! He declared, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me." (Jn 14: 6) Only Christ gives eternal life. And Christ only gives eternal life to those who believe on him. Without Christ we do not have life. We are dead in trespasses and in sins without Christ formed in the heart.

So possessions can give us nothing eternal. But a covetous heart set on having possessions, "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, [can certainly] choke the word, and [and make a man lose his soul.]" (Mr 4: 19)

Will you take heed and beware of covetousness? Will you realize that life—true, eternal life—is not found in the things that this world is covetous to possess! Christ alone is Life! Without Christ, no man has life! This is the prayer of those who know and rest in Christ:

Psalm 119:36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

A PARABLE

Luke 12: 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.

This man finally had what the whole unregenerate world is seeking—"I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry."

This man had much goods which he laid up for himself. He envisioned living many, many years and his years all being full of ease. He envisioned eating and drinking and being merry for years and years and years!

Why? His goods were his god! He thought he had security by his goods! He thought his goods would provide comfort for him! But he looked not to God who made the ground bring forth abundantly!

That is exactly what every covetous heart does. That is why covetousness is evil! It is idolatry. Those who are not seeking Christ are seeking salvation in the things of this world! But they find only woe!

Habbakuk 2:9: Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!

THE DEFINITION OF A FOOL

This man said to himself, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.” That is what he said to himself. “But God said unto him, *Thou fool,...*” God says such a man is God’s definition of a fool!

“*Thou fool this night, thy soul shall be required of thee:*” God said not many, many years from now but this night thy soul shall be required of thee. “Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

The last time one of your loved ones suddenly passed from this life, try to remember how shocked you were. You expected them to die but not that day! One day that will be me and you! Imagine, how shocked you will be if God says “this night” holy God requires you to stand before him!

None of us knows the hour or the day. This is why I press upon you the urgency of casting all your care on Christ today. You and I never know if God will say “this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

God has given us a soul. Death is not the end. We all will spend eternity somewhere. One day—a day and hour only God knows—God shall require thy soul of thee and you shall stand before him. We saw the rejoicing the believer will have when that day comes. But imagine how shocked you would be if “this night” holy God required you to stand before him!

“Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” Think of everything you have achieved and everything you possess right this minute. If you died tonight, will anything you have achieved or possess so far in your life do you any good spiritually and eternally? “Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” Then some other fools will be fighting over who gets your possessions. But without Christ, you will stand naked and empty before God. “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

BEING RICH TOWARD GOD

To be rich toward God is to possess the unsearchable riches of Christ—Christ himself! Christ himself is the believer’s riches! He is revealed by God. So call on God for mercy! He is revealed in his word. So study his word diligently! He is revealed in his gospel. So attend the preaching of the gospel consistently asking God to make you hear him speak! Give yourself to know Christ like you have been giving yourself for vain things. A person could possess the whole world and without Christ he possess nothing!

Matthew 16: 26: For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Being rich toward God is possessing Christ who is God. Christ is God! There his accomplished redemption for his people is eternal redemption, eternal life. Christ is God! Therefore, Christ rules everything in the life of his people for our good. Christ is God! Therefore, he provides the believer with everything we need both now and for all eternity. Christ is God! Therefore, he works his good pleasure in us. He does all this because he is sovereign God! Oh, the riches of possessing Christ our God!

Being rich toward God is having Christ who is also glorified Man. Christ is a Man like unto God's elect whom he saves! Therefore, Christ is able to comfort his people because there is no infirmity of ours that he was not touched with. Christ is a Man! Therefore, from the cradle to the grave, Christ experienced everything his people experience. And because he is God and Man, he is able to comfort us effectually. Christ is able to speak his word and give us life and faith, to speak his word and settle our hearts, to move his hand and snatch us from harms way! Ask any believer, you cannot put a price on possessing Christ the sovereign GodMan!

Being rich toward God is being fully robed inside and out by Christ himself. Christ freely robes those who rest in him in his righteousness. The law has nothing to say to the believer because in Christ we lived perfectly before his holy law when Christ lived perfectly under the law. Then Christ loved God and his brethren more than himself and laid down his life and justified us from all our sin. And freely Christ robes us inwardly with a new heart—"Christ in you the hope of glory." (Col 1: 27) He purges our conscience from dead works so that we have no more "conscience of sins." (Heb 9: 14; 10: 1-2) Christ makes you have no more fear that you have not done enough for God's acceptance. He give his redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, believing child a pure heart to be honest to confess you are nothing but sin and to be honest with God that you need grace and mercy.

Everything we need to be rich with God, Christ is. God puts us in Christ and God makes Christ to be our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption so that you believe and rejoice that Christ is All and in all! Therefore, in Christ and by Christ's works, God says to every believer what he says to his Son, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" (1 Cor 1: 30-31; Col 3: 11; Mt 25: 21)

Psalm 45:13: The king's daughter *is* all glorious within: her clothing *is* of wrought gold.

Being rich toward God is having a true family in God's people—"The whole family in heaven and earth." (Eph 3: 15) And to this family we are forever united in Christ!

Sinner, may God effectually, irresistibly work in you to make you,

Isaiah 55: 6: Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Our merciful God who chose his people by his free grace, who purchased his people with his own blood, who washes us in regeneration shall effectually call each and every one of his people.

Each one shall be made to forsake his way and his thoughts. Each one shall be made to return unto the LORD. And when they come to Christ begging mercy, he will have mercy upon each one. When they come begging to be pardoned, he will abundantly pardon. He has never turned away any sinner who came to him truthfully seeking mercy and pardon and he never shall! Oh, may God make you cast all your care upon him right now! None of us knows but he might just say, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee!" Oh, may you be found in him alone, with his righteousness alone, through faith in him alone!

THE LAST WORD

This is the sum. Each of us will entrust our eternal soul to possessions and suffer hell forever separated from God and all that is good! Or we will entrust our soul to Christ now and be accepted of God and live forever with him! There is no middle ground.

I sincerely pray for each one here that God set our heart on Christ only! Then when that hour comes, we shall immediately wake up in the presence of a satisfied God and rest in his arms forever!

Amen!