

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Luke 12:13-21 Text: vs. 21 *"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves, but is not rich toward God."*

There's a story about Noah Webster, you know, the man who published the dictionary that bears his name. Well, it's a story probably told more for its humor than its truthfulness. But legend has it, that during a party, Noah was caught by Mrs. Webster kissing the maid in the kitchen pantry. When she opened the door and saw her husband in that compromising situation, she said, "Why, Noah, I am surprised!" Ever the perfectionist. Always for correct word usage, Noah replied, "No my dear. You are amazed. I am surprised."

And as that great philosopher Forrest Gump said: "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get".

So, despite all your efforts trying to organize your own little world to your liking, there still are a few unpredictable things that can cause your life not to end up as you had hoped. One of the problems is, the *unexpected*. One's life seldom turns out how its planned.

There's a story about a man who wanted to know where the stock market would be in 30 days. He thought if he could just know where the stock market would end up at the end of 30 days, he could invest everything he had and make enough money to be secure for the rest of his life. So, one morning he got up to find a copy of the New York Times on his doorstep. He wasn't a subscriber. Curious, he took it inside. Unfolded it. And to his surprise, it was dated 30 days in advance. A miracle! He grabbed it. Ran to the kitchen table, spread it out, and started looking for the Financial Section. Suddenly, he saw the Obituary Section and couldn't resist taking a look at it. He started reading down the Obituaries listed and froze! There, in the Obituaries, he saw his own name listed for 30 days away! Slowly, he put the paper down. Nothing else mattered now! He hadn't expected that! To say the least, it was *unexpected!*

And that's what brings us to our Gospel lesson for today, for when the rich man in our lesson said to himself *"You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy. Eat. Drink. And be merry"*, 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?"* Now, look at that 21st verse. *"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves, but is not rich toward God."* That's our text for today! So, let's take a good, hard look at it! Just before Jesus told this parable, He had pointed out one of the fundamental misconceptions that cause a person to become greedy. He said, *"life does not consist in the abundance of possessions"*, the point being, greed leads to a false view of life. And the people listening to Jesus who were in the crowd that day were probably people who sized-up a person by what was owned.

So, this parable brings home this truth: Life has little to do with money! Or, keeping up with the neighbors! Or, having the latest one of this, or that. Measuring a person by what he, or she, may be wearing, driving, or owning isn't recommended. It may help keep score of who's the best, like baseball players, football players, or basketball players. But do they really need 87 million dollars for a ten-year contract? That's over 8 million dollars a year, just to play a game?

Yes, money can be a way of determining who's the best, and who's successful in the business field, but that's not what Jesus was teaching here. Jesus was trying to teach the people it's not what you have, or possesses that counts! It's what you are on the inside! Life doesn't consist of what you have on the outside. Life consists of what you are on the inside! And since there's no guarantee how long your life on this earth will be, what does it matter anyway?

John was born in 1917 in Brookline, Massachusetts. He graduated from Harvard University. Wrote two books: *Why England Slept*, and *Profiles in Courage*. The latter winning him a Pulitzer Prize. He was Captain of a PT boat in World War II. And he was elected the 35th President of the United States when he was just 43 years old, making him the youngest man to ever be elected president. You know the rest of the story. He traveling through Dallas, Texas in an open car on November 22, 1963 with his wife Jacqueline, and President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated!

. . . . Robert Green was born June 5th, 1935. After high school he joined the US Navy. Retired after 20 years. He was a good husband. A wonderful father of two children. After retiring from the Navy, he settled his family in Panama City, Florida where he worked as a Cable Television Technician. On September 16th, 1982, at the age of 47, Robert fell dead from a heart attack while at work.

. . . . Lester Lecroy was one of 12 children. Lester grew up in a home of very meager means. He was a rambunctious boy. But he was dependable. One day while cooling off after a hard day's work in a creek at the Iron Bridge on Cotton Hill Road in Eufaula, Alabama, Lester Lecroy lost his life at age 16. He never thought that day he drowned would be his last day before eternity.

. . . . See, whether well-known, or unknown, you're no different than anyone else. The Bible doesn't say you're promised a tomorrow. In fact, you're not even promised your next breath. Only God knows that! And that's exactly what Jesus told the rich man who thought he had it made! *"You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"* The rich man in our lesson thought he had it made. He had everything this life could offer. But before he could enjoy it, he died. And he left it all behind. He could not take

one cent of what he had worked for with him. And, he had left God out of the picture! In life, he was a fool! In death, he was unprepared! He had not been preparing for the future. He was only interested in the present.

But what about you? It may not happen to you for 30, 50 or even 70 years. But when it does happen, will your soul be ready to meet your Maker? Remember, you can't take *anything* with you. So, what are you doing with your life?

The Devil and his buddies were devising plans to get people to reject the Good News of Jesus. One said, *"Let's go and tell all the people there is no God"*. . . . Silence. . . . Those devils knew most people believe in a Supreme Being. So, another devil offered, *"Let's tell them there is no hell. There is no future punishment for the wicked"*. That was turned down. They knew people obviously have consciences. And if they tell them that well, it seemed the meeting was going to end in failure, when a loud devil's voice came from the rear: *"Tell them there is a God. Tell them there is a hell. Tell them the Bible is the Word of God. But tell them, there's plenty of time to decide. Let them 'neglect' the Gospel until it's too late"*. All those devils erupted with ghoulish glee. They knew, if a person put off accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, they usually never accept Him at all! Mission accomplished!

But it doesn't have to be that way. The Bible says, there is just one way to Heaven. And Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father but by me"*. (John 14:6) There is only one way to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, *"For by grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9) Those are the words you want to hear, not these, *"You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"* Accept Jesus as your Lord and savior, today! AMEN