

LIVING BY FAITH

Text: **Luke 12:13–21**

Theme: True life is not found in possessions, but in relationship with God.

Have you ever caught yourself thinking, *“If I just had a little more I’d be secure... then I’d be at peace”*? Well, in Luke 12 there was a man just like that! He went to Jesus over a dispute about his inheritance. And on the surface, it seemed like a reasonable request: *“Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”* (v.13) But he soon learned Jesus doesn’t always respond the way you may expect. And that’s the way it was with that man. Jesus didn’t settle the dispute. Instead, He told a parable, which is a short, simple story that teaches a spiritual or moral lesson by using everyday life examples.

And by the way, why are we focusing on Jesus’ parables these next few Sundays? This is the *“season for parables”* in our worship. It’s Ordinary Time. Look at the top of your Order of Worship where it refers to the Sundays after Pentecost. In the church liturgical calendar, this is when many churches focus on Jesus’ teaching when He used parables. He often used parables to talk about deep truths which made it easier for people to understand His teachings. He didn’t teach parables to entertain or simplify. He told them so you would search your soul. Each parable is like a mirror. It’s meant not to just reveal truth. But to *reflect on you*. It was a way that invites deeper thought about your life. And this story was a warning which can be applied to every one of us.

Look at vs. 15. Jesus said, *“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. Because life does not consist in an abundance of possessions”* meaning, greed comes in many forms. It’s not just *wanting what others have*. You’re always *needing more*. Always measuring your worth by your wealth. Holding onto money. Guarding your possessions. Buying food far beyond what is necessary or useful. It’s often done out of fear, insecurity, or a need for control. And Jesus said not to hoard your blessings. Instead, share them. And this lets Jesus cut right to the heart of the matter: *This wasn’t about inheritance. It was about idolatry*. This was a man concerned more with getting his share, than with guarding his soul. See, greed isn’t just about how *much* you have. It’s about how tightly you hold on to it. And how much you *depend* on it? But Jesus calls you to live differently. To trust Him. To hold things *lightly*. And be rich in what cannot be lost, which are faith, love, generosity. And have a heart set on God.

Now, look at verses 16–20. *This* story Jesus told was about a wealthy man who owned land that produced so much he ran out of space to store it. His solution? *“I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones... And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have had plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’”* Did you hear that? The self-centeredness in what he said? *I, my crops, my barns, my grain, myself*. He talks only about *himself*. About what belongs only to *himself*. But then, God comes into the picture and says, *“You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.”* That man had made plans for everything, except the one thing that mattered most. *His soul!* And that let Jesus close His parable with this sobering truth: *“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”* (vs. 21)

What does it mean to be rich toward God? It means having a heart that is full, not of what it owns. But of who owns it. Being grateful for what you have. Being generous with what you give. Trusting God more than your paycheck by investing in what lasts beyond this life. For example, including your church in your Last Will and Testament is a powerful act of faith and legacy. It’s a way of saying, *“Even in death, I want to honor God and support His work.”* And note, this parable isn’t just a warning. It’s an invitation. To a better life. A life of faith. A life of trust. Not fear, as we learned about last week! A life of contentment. Not endless longing. A life of purpose. Not just gathering things. So, what does it mean to live a life that is rich toward God? Well, being rich toward God starts with faith and knowing that your security is not in barns or bank accounts. It’s in the One who holds all things together. *“Seek first the Kingdom... and all these things will be given to you as well.”* (Matt. 6:33)

The rich man in the parable stored abundance. For himself. But a heart that’s rich toward God says: *“Lord, how can I bless others with what You’ve given me?”* Whether it’s time, money, or kindness, generosity is one of the clearest signs of a soul united with heaven. And when you are rich toward God, your first responsibility is worship. You don’t measure your worth by what you have. You measure your worth by who you belong to. And Jesus reminds you, that life is short. But eternity is not! To be rich toward God means investing in what lasts. *“Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”* (Matt. 6:20) A life that’s rich toward God is a life rooted in trust. Overflowing in gratitude. Open in generosity. And anchored in eternity. It’s not about how much you have. But how much of *you* belongs to *Him*.

And that’s the heart-searching meaning behind Jesus’ words in our lesson today. *“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”* (Luke 12:21) Jesus wasn’t just talking about money. He was talking about *ownership*. Not “How much do you give?” But *“How much of you belongs to Him?”* Do you belong to God only for an hour on Sunday mornings? Or does He shape your Monday decisions. Your

Tuesday relationships. Your everyday life? Are you just giving God what's left over? Like spare change! A little of your time here. Some of your energy there. A little bit of your attention? Or does He get the *first* and the *best*? Did you ever say you trust Him? But live for everything else and everybody depends on you? Or is it just your words? Because being rich toward God means giving Him more than lip service. It means *daily surrender*! It's all of you! Mark 12:30 tells you to "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.*" That's not part time. It's not just when it's convenient. It's everything!

Many want Jesus as Savior. But hesitate to make Him *Lord* of their life. However, the joy, peace, and fullness you long for comes only after you say: "*Lord, I'm all Yours. Not just my faith—but my plans, my possessions, my purpose.*" So, ask yourself, *Am I building bigger barns while neglecting my soul? Do I value what I have more than Who gave it to me? If I stood before God right now, would I be rich in what truly matters?*

Remember, your life is not your own. True security is not in what you possess. It's who possesses your heart! And who does possess your heart? That's one of the most important questions you'll ever answer. Not just with words. But with your life. When Jesus said: "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21) He meant, your heart should always follow what you value the most. So, the real question is: Who, or what, sits on the throne of your heart? *Is It Possessions?* Do you find peace in your savings? Is your worth in your success? If material things were taken away from you, would you crumble? *Is It People?* Do you look to others for your identity, support, or security? Even good relationships can become so upper most in heart they take the place only God should have. *Is It Control?* Do you feel safe only when you're in charge?

Sometimes, the real possessor of your heart is your own desire to manage, protect, and predict everything. *Is It Jesus?* To say Jesus possesses your heart means, you trust Him with your future. You obey Him with joy. You treasure His presence above all else. Paul told the Corinthians, "*You are not your own; you were bought at a price.*" (1 Corinthians 6:19–20) So, if Christ truly possesses your heart, it will show in your priorities, your generosity, your peace, your love. So, ask yourself: Who, or what, really possesses my heart? After you give yourself a heart checkup on that, the answer will tell you who, or what, really possesses your heart. And that's not just a philosophical question. It's a revealing one. Because whatever possesses your heart shapes your choices. Defines your identity. And determines your direction.

Jesus didn't just ask for attention or admiration. He asked for *your heart*. "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.*" (Mark 12:30) So, who, or what, really possesses your heart? The truth is, everyone gives their heart to something. But the question is will who, or what possesses yours and love you back? Will it last? Will it satisfy? It was only Jesus who gave His life to win your heart. And if He possesses your heart, it will show. Not in perfection. But in *affection*. Not in performance. But in *devotion*. You will find joy in His presence. Peace in His will. And purpose in His calling. And if it's anything less than Jesus Christ, know this! He's still here, still ready, still willing to receive you. There's nothing wrong with planning for the future. But the future isn't guaranteed. There's nothing wrong with wealth. But wealth is not a Savior. Jesus calls you to something greater: To live open-handed. To live by faith. To live for eternity. To be rich—not in things that fade—but rich toward God. It's never too late for you to do something about this.

Let us pray. And let this be your prayer.

Lord Jesus, I want You to have my whole heart. Not just my words, but my will. Not just my Sunday, but my every day. Take what I hold too tightly and teach me to treasure You above all.

Amen.