

THE GOSPEL LESSON Luke 12:13-21

(Jesus faces a question of how to fairly divide an inheritance and responds with the parable of the rich man.)

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."** (NIV)

INTRO - In 1867 The U.S. Secretary of State, William Seward had an opportunity to invest American money. He did, he engineered the investment of \$7.2 million of the U.S. money to buy a remote area. He purchased Alaska for the U.S. for about .02 an acre. We are glad he did. Yet, he was criticized because the purchase was to have been worthless. Instead the value of Alaska for resources, for strategic value, and as an important part of the U.S. has made Seward look like a genius. His investment grew in value.

I. Jesus warns His disciples, not to invest in something that will pass away and lose value, like the riches of this world, but to invest their time and energy, the resources and worship into the things of God.

A. After a man comes seeking Jesus' help in gaining the wealth of this world from his brother, Jesus tells a parable.

1. A man has a good return on a crop and puts all his efforts and resources into new barns.

2. Jesus points to the foolishness of the man because he has spent his time accumulating the material possessions of this world, but not becoming rich toward God.

3. Since the man will die that night, he has invested in something that will not last, and is not eternal.

4. Jesus says, ²¹ **"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."**

5. Jesus is calling his disciples to invest their time, their efforts, their lives, not in the pursuit of earthly possessions, but in their relationship with God.

B. This is not the only place Jesus calls on his disciples to put faith, and love, and their relationship with God ahead of the possessions of this world.

1. In Matthew 6:19, Jesus says, **19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**

20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Jesus is calling for people to treasure God and His kingdom, but not the possessions of this world.

2. Later in that chapter Jesus says, **Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** It is wise to put our efforts primarily into seeking God, not food and clothing, as our main treasure.

3. In Luke 12:33 Jesus says, **Luke 12:33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** In other words, we serve God by serving others.

C. Jesus calls for riches in our relationship with Him. These riches will last, and in fact, grow in importance.

1. According to Jesus, real treasure is God's kingdom, here and eternally.

2. Ultimately, real treasure worth pursuing is only one thing . . . God himself.

II. We have put our children's permanent fund money into college accounts. But, what if a child ignored college and used the money for say, a fancy car? The car may be fun for a while, but the value of a car will decline, and the value of education will usually increase.

A. When people choose the riches of this world over their relationship with God, they choose something that will pass away and be destroyed.

1. The man in the parable chose to pursue the wealth of this world, and was not ready when God called.

2. By choosing the things of this world to pursue, the man in the parable hurt his relationship with God, because instead of being rich toward God, he spent his time accumulating the riches of this world

3. In fact, the love for money and pursuit of wealth by the man who came to Jesus hurt his relationship with his brother, who was dividing the inheritance.

4. The pursuit of earthly wealth was not only unwise, but hurt this man's important relationships.

B. Yet, what seems more enticing?

1. If you give a child an opportunity to use their permanent fund to go into a college account, or to buy a snow-machine, which seems more desirable.

2. We talk of children, but how about adults, where are we led to invest, not just our money, but our time, our energy, our relationships?

3. If we invest in the things of this world, we often hurt our spiritual health.

III. Before you worry over your choices, let me share the choice God made concerning you.

A. 2 Corinthians 8 tells us about Jesus,

1. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

2. Jesus had the riches of heaven, which he tells us to pursue, but instead he chose to leave those riches, in love for us, to save us.

3. Jesus chose service and suffering and death on earth, so we could live in heaven.

B. If Jesus chose death for us, that should help us to choose to serve Him.

1. It is not longer just a matter of wisdom, but a matter of love.
 2. In love Jesus chose to serve us. It is not only a wise investment, but also a response of love to choose to pursue, to invest our time in, to serve our Lord Jesus.
- C. So, instead of just serving ourselves, our lives should wisely and lovingly serve God.
1. The man in the lesson had trouble loving his brother because of the inheritance. We choose Jesus when we love our brothers, the children of God around us.
 2. We choose Jesus when we choose to spend out time in worship and study of His word, over other the attractive things of this world.
 3. We choose Jesus when we spend our time and energy working for the Lord, whether telling others about Him, or helping build God's church.
 4. These things are loving and wise, because we invest in our relationship with our loving God, and grow rich in our relationship with Him.

CONCLUSION - In somewhere between 10 and 15 years I will reach the age of retirement. I have been putting money aside since I became a pastor when I was 26 in order to save for this reality. But, when I get there I will find out, have I invested my time, my resources wisely or not?

There is another day of reckoning we all face, which the man in this parable faced, the day of our death. In love Jesus calls to wise investment. Spend your time, your love, your resources on pursuing and choosing God and His people. The love and blessings of God last eternally. Amen.