

THE POOR WEALTHY FARMER

I. Luke 12:13-34

A. The Beatles sang, "*Money Can't Buy Me Love*" but few people bought in to that notion. They also sang, "*All You Need is Love*" and then they broke up. Some blamed Yoko Ono but the Fab Four evidently didn't believe their own lyrics. Wealthy hotel heiress, Leona Helmsley left her pet Maltese 12 million dollars when she died. The pooch's name was "*Trouble*." Her family got nothing. Virginia Metcalf Merida and her husband Mack Wayne Metcalf from Newport, KY won \$65.4 million in the Powerball Jackpot in 2000. They bought a \$3 ticket at a truck stop down the road in Florence. They divorced right afterwards (money couldn't buy them love either). Both died tragically a few years apart. Virginia was found dead by her son near Thanksgiving in 2005 and her husband died of an overdose 2 years earlier. Both died alone.

B. Our text today tells of a successful farmer who was making money hand-over-fist. He also had big plans to make more. The Scriptures refer to this story as a parable but I have a hunch some of these stories Jesus told were true...

C. Luke 12:13-21 (ESV) begins with Jesus being asked to help settle an estate...

1) **V13-15: 13** *Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."* **14** *But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or arbitrator over you?"* **15** *And He said to them, "Take care, (OV Watch out!) and be on your guard against all covetousness, (Greed) for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (There's warning in Jesus' voice! Greed will rob your soul! That's true for rich and poor alike! The measure of a man is not what he owns or his net worth; it's who he is before God! So Jesus tells a parable to help us all understand.)*

2) **V16-17: 16** *And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'" (Farmer Rich was successful even before the harvest. He could afford good seed, good help, and by extension, good soil.)*

3) **V18-21: 18** *And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" (He's focusing on 3 people--they're all named, Me and Me and Me.) 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." (What does it mean to be rich toward God? Is there a difference in seeing ourselves as owners vs seeing ourselves as stewards? Can money and stuff enslave us? In 1 Timothy 6:10 (NLT) Paul warns: **10** *For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.**

D. The Zulus of Africa found a clever way to catch the ever-elusive lemur. They cut a very small hole in a melon growing on a vine. Lemurs love the melon seeds so they reach in their hands, grab the seeds, but their fist full of seeds is too big to pull back out of the melon. And yet the lemurs refuse to let go of the seeds so they're ensnared. The Zulus simply come and nab their prey and sell them off to zoos...

E. We all face battles with *the axis of evil*, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Before Christ, we were card-carrying members. Made alive in Christ, this trio became our sworn enemies. They know what melon seeds will best attract our attention! They custom carve out the right size hole for each of our hands. They know what seeds we'll grab hold of and not let go. And before we blame the world, or the devil and his demons, or cast blame on God, let's revisit **James 1:13-15 (ESV) **13** *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.***

F. Luke 12:22-34 (ESV) our text continues. In the spring of 1974 I spoke at Baccalaureate just before our graduation. You're about to hear my text. I recommend circling back to these verses on a regular basis. If they've never been relevant for you, just wait awhile!

1) V22-30: 22 *And He said to His disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith! 29 And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. 30 For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. (Memorize this: "My Father knows what I need!")*

2) V31-32: 31 *Instead, seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (KOG: The entire realm of God's Fatherly rule and reign where His Son, Christ Jesus our Lord, is enthroned as King.)*

3) V33-34: 33 *Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (When our hearts turn up missing, they're probably hanging close to our treasures.)*

G. Back-in-the day when there were soda fountains, a young boy dropped by for an ice cream treat. He asked the waitress the cost of a hot fudge sundae. With a glare of impatience, she replied 25 cents. Then he asked her how much to add whipped cream and nuts. Curtly she replied, 5 cents! He then slowly counted his pocket change. The waitress rolled her eyes. So he finally ordered the sundae but without the whipped cream and nuts. Now plenty annoyed, she made the sundae, clanked it down in front of the kid, and walked away. When she came back to his place, the kid was gone. And there on the counter beside his finished sundae was 30 cents--a quarter for the sundae and a nickel for her tip...

H. So here are some things from our text to take home today...

1) First and foremost--seek God's Kingdom, His will and word and ways...

2) As for food & clothing and basic needs--trust God! (Remember what the ravens & lilies teach us, not to mention all the other birds and flowers.)

3) As for the difficult things we face--trials, troubles, & tribulations--trust God!

4) Revisit often where our Greatest Treasure lies so we don't lose track of the location of our hearts. If our hearts are missing in action, where might they be found?

5) There are many ways to be rich and poor and God knows who's truly rich and who's truly poor. And always remember there's no one richer than our God!

6) Giving to those less fortunate from our treasures here on earth, be they big or small, is one way we lay up treasures in heaven...

7) Mark 8:36 (NKJV) outside of our text but holding hands with it: *36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Answer? NOTHING!*

*** Close with Prayer...**

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Luke 12:13-34 (ESV)

13 Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." **14** But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" **15** And He said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." **16** And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, **17** and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' **18** And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **19** And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" **20** But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' **21** So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." **22** And He said to His disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. **23** For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. **24** Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! **25** And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? **26** If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? **27** Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **28** But if

God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith! **29** And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. **30** For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. **31** Instead, seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. **32** Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. **33** Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. **34** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

1 Timothy 6:10 (NLT)

10 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

James 1:13-15 (ESV)

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. **14** But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. **15** Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Mark 8:36 (NKJV)

36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

How The Zulus Catch Ring-tailed Monkeys (Lemurs)

Men who trap animals in Africa for zoos in America say that one of the hardest animals to catch is the ring-tailed monkey. For the Zulus of that continent, however, it's simple. They've been catching this agile little animal with ease for years. The method the Zulus use is based on knowledge of the animal. Their trap is nothing more than a melon growing on a vine. The seeds of this melon are a favorite of the monkey. Knowing this, the Zulus simply cut a hole in the melon, just large enough for the monkey to insert his hand to reach the seeds inside. The monkey will stick his hand in, grab as many seeds as he can, then start to withdraw it. This he cannot do. His fist is now larger than the hole. The monkey will pull and tug, screech and fight the melon for hours. But he can't get free of the trap unless he gives up the seeds, which he refuses to do. Meanwhile, the Zulus sneak up and nab him.

- Charles Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*, p.150 ff.

The Kingdom of God - Pastor Steve's Definition

Volumes of books have been written about the Kingdom of God. Here's a simple definition of the Kingdom of God: The place where the Fatherly rule of God, the rulership realm of the King of kings, inhabited by the Spirit-born children of God, will live forevermore in the holy and blissful presence of our Almighty Triune God. With a taste of it now, in that ultimate place of splendor we will worship the One who made the way for us to live with Him forever via the sacrifice of Himself on the cross, achieving a crushing victory over sin and death, demonstratively displayed by His resurrection from the dead.

- Definition of the Kingdom of God, Pastor Steve's sermon, "*Treasure the Treasure*," May 15, 2022.

Bonus Goodies

"Jesus, My Treasure" - Equip Church International
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfv2fsUOxv4>

The Kingdom of Heaven is a Treasure - John Piper
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ABfkbeG6bU>

George Mueller (Father of 10,000 Orphans)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCU-mfHNqCQ>

Luther: The Life and Legacy of the German Reformer - Ligonier Ministries
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VK0p-tuuao>

More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras

Psalm 12:5 (ESV)

5 "Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise," says the LORD; "I will place him in the safety for which he longs."

Psalm 140:12 (ESV)

12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute justice for the needy.

Deuteronomy 15:7-8 (ESV)

7 "If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, **8** but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be.

Deuteronomy 15:11 (ESV)

11 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

Ecclesiastes 5:15 (NLT)

15 We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we were born. We can't take our riches with us.

Luke 6:20-21 (ESV)

20 And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. **21** "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Matthew 5:3 (ESV)

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 6:19-21 (ESV)

19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV)

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 (ESV)

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, **7** for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. **8** But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. **9** But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

1 Peter 1:3-9 (NIV)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, **5** who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. **6** In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **7** These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. **8** Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, **9** for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 John 3:17 (ESV)

17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Quote by Martin Luther

"Riches are the least worthy gifts which God can give man, yet men toil for them day and night, and take no rest. Therefore, God frequently gives riches to foolish people to whom He gives nothing else."

Quote by R.C. Ryle

"A converted beggar is far more important and honorable in the sight of God than an unconverted king."

Quote by Donald Horban

"We don't need to increase our goods nearly as much as we need to scale down our wants. Not wanting something is as good as possessing it."

Quote by Jay Kesler

"Things are to be used and God is to be loved. We get into trouble when we begin to use God and love things."

Quote by David Livingstone

"I place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of God. If anything will advance the interests of the kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time or eternity."

Quote by Uncle Si Robertson - Duck Dynasty

"When we was growing up we was dirt poor. Okay, and now like I know what it's to be, you know, to have money. It's up to us to be a good steward with it, okay, and then share the wealth so to speak. Cause if we don't use it to benefit somebody else other than us, you know, what good is it, really, when you come right down to it?"

- Pack A Shoebox With Uncle Si - Samaritan's Purse, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1LqdgXMB8>

Quote by Hannah Whitall Smith

"What is needed for happy effectual service is simply to put your work into the Lord's hand, and leave it there. Do not take it to Him in prayer, saying, "Lord, guide me, Lord, give me wisdom, Lord, arrange for me," and then arise from your knees, and take the burden all back, and try to guide and arrange for yourself. Leave it with the Lord, and remember that what you trust to Him you must not worry over nor feel anxious about. Trust and worry cannot go together."

Quote by George Macdonald

"It is not the cares of today, but the cares of tomorrow, that weigh a man down. For the needs of today we have corresponding strength given. For the morrow we are told to trust. It is not ours yet. It is when tomorrow's burden is added to the burden of today that the weight is more than a man can bear."

Quote by John MacArthur

"For some reason, we think of doubt and worry as "small" sins. But when a Christian displays unbelief...or an inability to cope with life, he is saying to the world, "My God cannot be trusted," and that kind of disrespect makes one guilty of a fundamental error, the heinous sin of dishonoring God. That is no small sin."

Quote by George Mueller

"The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety."

Quote by Arthur Somers Roche

"Anxiety is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all others thoughts are drained."

Quote by Corrie ten Boom

"Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts whirling around a center of fear."

Quote by Corrie ten Boom

"Worry is like a rocking chair-it keeps you moving but doesn't get you anywhere."

Quote by Corrie ten Boom

"Worry is like racing the engine of an automobile without letting in the clutch."

Quote by Corrie ten Boom

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength."

How Much Land Does a Man Need?

Leo Tolstoy once wrote a story about a successful peasant farmer who was not satisfied with his lot. He wanted more of everything. One day he received a novel offer. For 1000 rubles, he could buy all the land he could walk around in a day. The only catch in the deal was that he had to be back at his starting point by sundown. Early the next morning he started out walking at a fast pace. By midday he was very tired, but he kept going, covering more and more ground. Well into the afternoon he realized that his greed had taken him far from the starting point. He quickened his pace and as the sun began to sink low in the sky, he began to run, knowing that if he did not make it back by sundown the opportunity to become an even bigger landholder would be lost. As the sun began to sink below the horizon he came within sight of the finish line. Gasping for breath, his heart pounding, he called upon every bit of strength left in his body and staggered across the line just before the sun disappeared. He immediately collapsed, blood streaming from his mouth. In a few minutes he was dead. Afterwards, his servants dug a grave. It was not much over six feet long and three feet wide. The title of Tolstoy's story was: *How Much Land Does a Man Need?*

- *Bits & Pieces*, November, 1991.

King Tut's Treasure

By Randy Alcorn

Tutankhamen, the boy king, was only 17 when he died. He was buried with solid gold chariots and thousands of golden artifacts. His gold coffin was found within gold tombs within gold tombs within gold tombs. The burial site was filled with tons of gold. The Egyptians believed in an afterlife--one where they could take earthly treasures. But all the treasures intended for King Tut's eternal enjoyment stayed right where they were

until Howard Carter discovered the burial chamber in 1922. They hadn't been touched for more than three thousand years. 1 Timothy 6:7 says, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out"

The Archbishop's Lost Treasure

Author Unknown

Two divers found a strange treasure in the River Wear near Durham Cathedral. They found a stash of coins, medals and religious objects. To whom did this treasure belong? They were the possessions of the late Michael Ramsey, former archbishop of Canterbury. This spot in the river was very near where Ramsay served and later retired in 1974.

The genuineness of the hundreds of items has been confirmed by cathedral officials. One of the items was a gift from Pope Paul VI; others are significant archeological items. The question is, How did they get there? Some suggest the items were stolen from Ramsey. One of the divers suggested Ramsey may have thrown them in the river himself—as a symbolic offering to the people of Durham. Another suggestion is that it was a symbolic statement by Ramsey that we cannot take it with us when we die.

If Ramsey did throw the treasures in the river, we might question if that was good stewardship, but it is clear that he did not take them with him. We can't either. The only things that go with us when we die are the treasures we have laid up in heaven.

Imelda Marcos

In 1986 angry Filipinos took to the streets of Manila and drove Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos from power. In her haste to escape into exile, Imelda left behind more than 1,200 pairs of shoes, 427 designer dresses, and 71 pairs of sunglasses. In a country where two out of every three households lacked adequate food, this was extravagant to say the least! During their twenty years in power, the couple plundered nearly \$12 billion from their poverty-stricken country.

- *Today in the Word*, August, 1997, p. 34