

AM Luke 12:13-21 Are you a fool?

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Date: 13 February 2022

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[0 : 00] The children of the Deer Address this morning, now here's a brief story for the adults. A young man finishes university and decides to work in the city.

He becomes a city trader. So he moves down to London and the city trader plays the financial markets.

He makes good investments across a number of companies and over the years he becomes financially secure. Their private pension is well topped up.

Their mortgage is paid off and they have a nice second home in France and cash in the bank. Their children have finished university, settled in their first flat and now it's time to relax and enjoy the rewards of their hard work.

It's time to sit back, to eat, drink and enjoy their retirement. After all, is that not what society gives us as our goals?

[1 : 25] Is that not what society expects of our success? But what do you think of such a person? But a successful city trader has taken his eyes off the ball through the years.

He's built up his own wealth, taken care of the family. But he's taken his eye off one important thing in life, his relationship with God.

Now let's look at a parable which Jesus told in a similar vein in chapter 12. Luke chapter 12 verses 13 to 21.

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Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But he said to him, Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?

[2 : 46] 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.

And he told them a parable saying, The land of a rich man produced plentifully. And he thought to himself, What shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops.

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.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, be merry.

But God said to him, Fool, this night your soul is required of you. And the things you have prepared, Whose will they be?

[3 : 50] So it is the one who lays up treasures for himself. And is not rich towards God. Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy word.

And to his name be the glory and praise. Amen. Briefly pray again. Father, we give you thanks for the reading of your word.

And we ask that the words of my mouth And the thoughts of our hearts Be acceptable in your sights. Our Lord and our Redeemer.

Amen. Amen. So this morning we have going to look at the parable of the rich young man.

The title this morning, basically, From Everything to Nothing. Or a question is, Are you a fool? Some of us may have an abundance of wealth.

[4 : 52] And some of us, in these daunting times, May feel as though we are struggling to get by. But the parable has a message For whichever camp we see yourselves in.

The parable we have read this morning Appears to be short and simple Tale about a rich landowner. But there is a twist in the tale.

We have not become self-absorbed in our earthly wealth And neglect We are not, sorry, to become self-absorbed In our earthly wealth And neglect our relationship with God.

And this is why Jesus refers to the rich young man as a fool. He was a fool because he focused on the material Rather than the spiritual.

He focused on the temporal And not on the eternal. And he focused on himself Rather than on God. However, hidden in this short parable Is a message more complex For Jesus' first hearers Than we often realise.

[6 : 05] We must not isolate This small portion of scripture And strive to understand it From one isolated section.

We should look at it in relation To where it sits As part of a larger message. And to look at what is before the parable And what follows the parable.

So this parable can actually be seen As part of a bigger discourse That starts at the start of chapter 12 And continues into chapter 13.

Where a number of topics are discussed But each of them are linked By a common theme. And that common theme Was about Jesus' radical And challenging teachings.

In chapter 12 verse 1 Jesus starts his teachings With a warning To be aware of the hypocrisy Of the Pharisees And how their teachings Spread through society.

[7 : 11] And he uses the image Of leaven or yeast Spreading through bread. He also warns his hearers In verse 15 Of our parable this morning About the need To be on their guard Against covetousness Against greed.

And after speaking about possessions In this parable Jesus goes on to Teach the disciples About not worrying About provisions For themselves That God will provide.

He compares Or he looks at The images of how God Provides for the ravens And how he dresses The lilies in the field. And if he does that For the animals In his creation How much more Does he care For his children For those he created In his own image.

So let's look at The passage And its significance For Jesus' hearers And for us today. The introduction Of the parable Comes With an interruption Of Jesus Teaching his disciples.

A young man Asks him What seems A completely Irrelevant question. He asks him To become involved In the issue Of his inheritance And sorting it out In verse 13.

[8 : 36] He asks Jesus To intervene To settle The matter Of his inheritance. We're given Little background To what the dispute Is with him And his brother.

But the normal Distribution For an inheritance Where you had Two brothers Would follow The teachings Of Deuteronomy In chapter 21. Where the eldest brother Would get Two thirds Of the inheritance And the younger brother Would get a third.

So the older brother Would get a double portion. Now we're not told If the problem Is that the brother The older brother Will not give The younger brother His third inheritance Or whether The younger brother Actually wants The share Of his Elder brother's Greater inheritance.

Jesus dismisses Any part In dispute Saying that Who made me The arbitrator Of this dispute? It's not my business.

But it does Give Jesus The opportunity To Continuous teaching In relation To right Relationships With God. And Jesus Then continues That theme.

[9 : 56] In verse 15 Jesus starts His teaching With a warning But also With a word Of wisdom. Then he said To them Watch out Be on your guard Against all kinds Of greed.

Life does not Consist In an abundance Of possessions. He warns them His warning Is in telling His hearers To watch out And be on Your guard While alerting Them to What to be On their guard For. To be on their guard Against all kinds Of greed. There is more To life Than abundance Of possessions. He uses Intrusion To focus On greed And covetousness.

We are not To treat Our possessions As idols To put them In the place That should be Reserved For God In our lives. So it's okay To have possessions But they should Not be placed Before God. This is not Only something The rich Must guard Against But something That those Who are without Also require To guard Against. The poor Can covet Just as much As a rich man.

[11 : 13] Verse 16 And 18 Jesus starts To tell Us the tale Of the rich man's Accumulation Of wealth And the decisions He has made. The rich man Appears to be Blessed As his land Has yielded An abundant Harvest.

It says Jesus' Hearers The landowner Would appear Blessed by God. The Old Testament Which would Have formed Part of their Scripture Presented A positive View of wealth Provided It was not Gained By oppression Or Taken from The needy Or the weak Greed On the other Hand Was seen As a form Of depravity Both In Jewish Society And in the Wider Greek Roman world Wealth Was seen As a blessing From God For faithfulness In Ecclesiastes 5 Verses 18 To 20 It's recorded Behold What I have seen To be good And fitting Is to eat And drink And find Enjoyment In all the Toil With which One toils Under the sun The few days Of his life That God Has given him For this Is his lot Everyone Also to whom God has given Wealth And possessions And power To enjoy them And to accept His lot And rejoice In his toil This is his gift From God And similarly In Deuteronomy Chapter 28 Verses 8 It's written Moses writes The Lord will command The blessing On you In your barns And in all That you Undertake And he will Bless you In the land That the Lord Your God Is giving you So The initial View of Jesus First century Hearers Is that the Landowner Has been blessed And now He has a problem How is he To store This abundant Harvest The solution Seems Completely reasonable He will build Bigger barns To store The surplus After all He's not just A good farmer He's a good Businessman He's grown A surplus He will store It And he will Use it In future Years Rather than Simply flood The market And cause The price To crash In verse In verse 17 The rich man Starts to Plan And is Betrayed Speaking to Himself About His plans He centres His plans Around himself And we see This continue Into verses 18 and 19 Verses 18 and 19 read Then he said This is what I will do I will tear Down my Barns And build Bigger ones And there I will store My surplus Grain And I will Say to Myself You have Plenty of Grain Laid up For many Years Take life Easy Eat Drink And be Merry The rich man's Thoughts are about Himself Alone And in these Three verses He uses the Personal pronouns I and My Nine times Nine times He speaks About himself And what He will do And about His belongings He is now The centre Of his plans In verse 19 We see the Rich man's Plans For to relax And to enjoy The fruits Of his endeavours To eat Drink And be merry So little Appears to have Changed in the Last 2000 years As our modern Interpretation Highlighted at The beginning A present day Society Would expect The same reaction From the Successful person Today To relax To enjoy The rewards To eat Drink And to be Merry However Verse 20 Of our Quaint tale Is disrupted [15 : 32] The dreams Of enjoying One's possessions Are shattered As Jesus Continues With his Parable Announcing 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 yourselves Jesus Refers to The rich man As a fool A fool But he Has been A success Imagine saying To Alan Sugar Or Bill Gates That you're a fool Despite their Business success Does not Society today See them As wise And a model To be Followed A model That we Should imitate But what Is the meaning Of fool And why Is Jesus Describing This successful Farmer As a fool The dictionary

Gives us Two meanings For fool The first Is a person Who acts Unwisely Or Imprudently That certainly Doesn't seem To be A wise Businessman Who has Made an Abundant Has grew An abundant Crop And has now Stored it Or It's a Jester Especially One who Would have Been retained In a royal Household In the middle Ages Again That certainly Doesn't fit The image Of Our rich Landowner But for Jesus' Original Hearers The word Fool Has a Very Different Meaning In the Old Testament We see The meaning Which Jesus Hearers Would give To it And with Which Jesus Uses it For example We sung this Morning in Psalm 14 Verse 1

The fool Says in His heart There is No God They are Corrupt Their deeds Are vile There is No one Who does Good A view That is Mirrored In Psalm 53 And in Proverbs 12 15 It reads The way Of fools Seems Right to Them And the Wise Listen To Advice And again That is Mirrored In Proverbs 28 The fool Is self Confident And he Is closed Minded The fool Denies The existence Of God Or at Very least Disregards God In his Life God Is an Irrelevance As the Fool Has put Himself Before God And he Trusts in His own Abilities Rather than Seeking Advice Or Following God's Law The fool Even if Believing In God

Acts Like he Does Not Exist A very Different Image Of Fool We Also see How God Looks upon The fool He is Corrupt His actions Are wicked And all That And he Is all That is The opposite Of God He is Far From God So now Do we See The rich Landowner As a Fool Yes His thoughts And actions Are all His own Verses 17 To 19 Is all About the Landowner Reflecting On himself He uses Phrases Like What shall I do This is What I'll Do I will Tear Down I will Store My surplus Grain And I'll Say To Myself These Phrases Highlight The self Thought And self Centredness Of the Rich Landowner

It's all About His Thoughts His Actions With no Reference To anyone Let alone To God So he Was a Fool Has refused Or he Neglected To think Beyond his Own And immediate Pleasure He had No thought Of how His Blessing Of abundant Harvest Could be Used for Man Or for God He could Not look Beyond his Present life And it is Now too Late As this Night He will Die His Time On earth Will be Over With no Time to Make amends He has Made his Decisions In life And they Have ran Their course Now what Good Are his Barns Of grain And possessions He cannot Take them With him As the Saying goes There is No pockets In a Shroud He is

[20 : 36] Gone From this World And someone Else Will enjoy His Riches So Jesus Finishes The parable In verse 21 With the Warning This is How it Will be With whoever Stores up Things For themselves But is Not rich Towards God Jesus Finishes With the Warning He began In verse 15 That our Life does Not consist Of an Abundance Of possessions It requires A right Relationship With God If we Have a Right Relationship With God Then we Will be Rich Beyond All measure Not with Gold Or silver Not with Possessions Or fast Cars But in That we Will have The security Of eternal Life With God Through Jesus Christ His Son Possessions In themselves Are not Evil Or wrong They are Inanimate Objects

It is Our character It is how We react Towards them That is Important Do we See them As a Means to Serve God Or are They Our gods To be Adored And honoured Above all Else Success And wealth Are not The problem The problem Is our Greed Which pushes God Out of the Picture It is Our sinful Nature Which excludes God As we Pursue Our own Goals Jesus Is clear That the First priority Is a Right Relationship With God God Will provide For us But we Require To be In a Personal Relationship With God The difficulty Is we Have started To look In the Wrong Places We Invest In the Wrong Things Concentrating On ourselves And never Seeing beyond What society Expects Of us Never Looking To our Eternal Future But Concentrating Solely In the Here And now We Require Rather To focus On how We become Rich How we Become rich Towards God In verse 21 Paul tells Us of how Christ Has made Himself Poor Forsaking The glory Of heaven To become Incarnate As a Baby Jesus Born In a Stable Who Faced The temptations Of man And yet Remained Sinless He Became Sin That He May Substitute For us On the Cross Dying In our Place That we May be Raised With him In glory In 2nd Corinthians 8 and 9 Paul writes 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 Through His Poverty Might Become Rich God Has Already Prepared The way For us To return To him Being in the Centre of Our lives We We We Must Make The Choice To Respond The Rich Fool Became Wealthy In What He Seen As Valuable But It Failed To Accumulate Wealth To Build Up Riches Where It Really Mattered With God We Build Up Riches With God Not By Grand Deeds Or By Mighty Donations Or Religious Piety We Build Up Riches With God By Having A Right Relationship With Him That We Have God At The Center Of Our Lives That Our Aim Is To Honour And Praise Him Not To Kick Him Into Touch When We Have Other Goals In Mind God Knows Our Nature He Knows We Cannot Make

Right To Our Relationship With Him By Ourselves Because Of Our Failings Because Of Our Sin Sin Being That We Act Against God's Commandments To Us This Rebellion Cuts Us Off From God As The Price Of Sin Is Death And Separation From God As The Rich Fool Was To Discover So God God And His Love Gave His Son As A Route Back To Relationship With God He Sent His Son Jesus Christ To Die On The Cross At Calvary For Our Sin He Paid The Price For Our Sin He Redeemed Us That We May Once More Have A Right Relationship With God Through Christ We Are Saved Through Christ Alone In John 14 6 Jesus states I am The Way And The Life No One Sorry I am The Way And The Truth And The Life No One Comes To The Father Except

[25 : 39] Through Me By Accepting Christ As Our Redeemer As The One Who Paid The Penalty For Our Sin We Can Once More Come Into A Personal Relationship With God But In Making That Decision All Is Not Now Finished For The New Christian Rather They Are Now Started Upon A Journey To Keep A Right Relationship With God And With The Things Of This World Our Purpose Is To Glorify God And To Enjoy Him Forever As Stated Earlier Possessions Are Inanimate Objects It Is Us Who Place Value On Them And We Require To Ensure The Value We Place On Them Is Not Above God The Real Problem Is Not Wealth But Greed About Coveting What We Do Not Have We Must Check Ourselves That We Are Not Always Having To Have More And More That

The Pursuit Of Possessions Is Not All Consuming Rather That We Have A Heart Of Service To God And Look As To How Our Wealth And Possessions May Be Used For God's Jesus Issues Us With

A Timeless Warning Our Time On Earth Is Finite Do Not Be Distracted By Worldly Goods Or Values From A Right Relationship With God That Will Be For Eternity Remember We Know Not When God Will Call Us The Rich Man's Death Was Sudden It Was That Night We Don't Know When Our Days Are Numbered So Don't Hesitate Too Long In Accepting Christ As Our Saviour Let's Just Pray Father we

Give You Thanks For The Studying Of Your Word God We Ask That We Have The Right Balance In Our Lives That Whatever We Have Great Or Small Is Subordinate To You To You Are The Center Of Our Lives And Our Purpose Is To Glorify And Honor You For Anyone Who Is Unsure Of Where Their Heart Really Lies We We Ask That You Pour Out Your Spirit Upon Them Soften Their Hearts And By Your Grace Bring Them To An Understanding And Acceptance Of Christ As Their Saviour And You At The Center Of Their Lives These Things We Ask Through Jesus Christ Our Lord And Saviour Amen

We Close Our Worship This Morning Sorry Actually If Anybody Was Trying To Follow Some Of The Verses In The Bible This Morning My Apologies Because Normally You Use ESV When I Was Doing This My Computer Was Set NIV Because I Been Doing Work And Writing An Essay So The Verses I Used Are Mainly From NIV So My Apologies For That This Morning Let's Close Our Service With Blessed Assurance Jesus Is Mine