

Luke 12:13-34

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[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

We're going to start reading at verse 13 and read down through verse 34. And I have to say up front, I don't like this sermon. Because every word points back at my own heart.

So, if you don't mind, I'm just going to preach to me. And if you want to listen in, you're welcome.

Okay? Let's read. Let me read. You can follow along.

Luke 12, beginning of verse 13. Someone in the crowd said to him, And 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? 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.

[1 : 15] And he told him 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'll do this. I'll 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.

Three years. Relax, eat, drink, and 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? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself And is not rich towards God.

[2 : 16] And he said to his disciples, Therefore, I tell you, Do not be anxious for your life, What you will eat, Nor about your body, What you will put on.

For life is more than food, And the body more than clothing. 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? And which of you, by being anxious, Can add a single hour to his lifespan?

If you are not able to do as small a thing as that, Why are you anxious about the rest? 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. 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?

[3 : 29] And do not seek what you are to eat, And what you are to drink, Nor be worried. For all the nations of the world Seek after these things.

And your father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, And these things will be added to you. He said, Fear not, little flock, For it is your father's good pleasure To give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions, And give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags That do not grow old. With a treasure in the heavens That does not fail.

Where no thief approaches, And no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, There will your heart be also.

Let's pray, As we enter into a study, Of this portion of God's word. Father, Father, Yeah, these, All these words, Say so much, About the nature of my own faith, And the things that I treasure, The fear, And the worry, And the anxiety, The life that I try to build On my own terms.

[4 : 57] And Father, I pray that for me, But also for the rest of us, That you would, Not just show us our hearts, And where we fail, To focus on, What is true, And enduring.

Give us eyes to see, What is real. And give us a glimpse, Maybe a new, Fresh glimpse, Of the treasures, Of heaven, That are found in Jesus, That we might turn our hearts, Towards him. This is going to require, Your Holy Spirit. So Holy Spirit, Would you come, And speak to us, And would you, Soften our hearts, And implant, Your word, In the depth of our souls, And cause it to grow, And bear fruits.

And we pray in Jesus name. Amen. I don't know if you've ever been, Involved, With a family squabble, Over inheritance money.

Fortunately, I have not, But I had a very good friend, Back in Atlanta, Who was, In such a family, Who had sisters, That they were all, Close, They had good relationships, Up until, The death of their last parent, And everything fell apart, Over the estate.

[6 : 32] And there's something about money, That does this to us, And we see, I mean, The example here, You've got, Jesus, Who's been teaching, And, Obviously, He is a wise prophet, And so, Somebody wants to take advantage, And to elicit Jesus support, For him, In the midst of his family squabble, And so, He comes to Jesus, And says, Hey, Jesus, Make my brother, Share the inheritance, I mean, Obviously, This was probably the younger, Of the two brothers, Because the oldest son, Got twice, The share, Of the inheritance, And sometimes, They weren't as free, To share it all, And so, Yeah, There are laws, Governing all of this, But, You know, The laws don't govern, Every scenario, So, This guy's trying to elicit Jesus, For his help,

But what Jesus does here, Is basically says, No way, I'm getting into that, Because this points us, To a much bigger issue, And so, He takes the occasion, Of this squabble, To now teach, The crowds, Who are following, Him, And what he's talking about here, And it's the theme, That runs all through this section, Is that of treasure, What do we treasure, What kind of treasure, Are we pursuing, What treasure, Does our hearts long for, What are we living for, And so, It comes out, In two different ways, We see, He's going to deal, At the beginning, With, Those who are working, Feverishly, To build, Their treasure, To build,

A life, Around their treasure, But then you have, Kind of the flip side, Of the coin, You know, Those are the haves, But then you've got, The have nots, Who live in fear, And anxiety, Over, Either the lack, Of treasure, That they think, They need, Or want, Or the threat, To that treasure, But it's all the same issue, And so, Where we look for, And find treasure, Will determine, So much, About how we live, Our whole lives, What we fear, Or whom we fear, And how much we fear, So let's look at, As Jesus begins to deal, We'll look at, Two aspects of this problem, And the first one, Is a problem of eschatology, I'll explain in a minute, What eschatology is, It's a nice big theological word, That some of you, May not have heard of, But he's first, Jesus is first addressing, These crowds, Over the issue, Of building a life, Based all on, Their, Their wealth, And their possessions, So, And he uses this parable, The parable is this, You know, We call it the parable, The rich fool, He has a bumper crop, One year, And notice also, In this parable, The way Jesus is teaching it here, He said, The bumper crop just happened, It was not because, Of the smart farming methods, That the rich man was using, This is just one of those, Years, Over which he had no control, That produced, A huge, Crop, And he doesn't now know, What to do with it, He's got storage barns, But they're not big enough,

And so instead of, Tearing, You know, Instead of just building more barns, He decides, All right, I'm just going to tear these down, I'm going to build bigger ones, But the barns, Are not just for the crop, You'll notice, He wants bigger barns, To store not only the crop, But also, His possessions, So, Storing the crop like this, Sounds like, You know, Good, Economic, Smart, You know, Agribusiness, But there was a problem, What he did was all legal, And again, It was probably what, You know, The, The agriculture department, Of his state, Would recommend, But it had some disastrous effects, Because if he, Just stored all this crop, It would take a huge amount of grain,

[11 : 41] Off the market, Prices would rise, And all of a sudden, This bumper crop that he had stored, Was now worth so much more, Pretty smart, Except, All of the peasants, The non-land owners, Would pay the price, They would suffer, Because of his ingenuity, So, Now, He's got his barns, He said, Let's relax, Be satisfied, Enjoy the wealth, Enjoy the security, Enjoy this knife, Wall of protection, That I've built around myself, Not knowing, Not knowing, That that very night, His life, Would come to an end, Security,

That he thought he had, In the end, Proved vain, All of that work, All that he had tried to build up, To give him that kind of protection, In many ways, It was all wasted, But it was a pretty amazing, It's a pretty strong statement, Where God comes to him, And says, Fool, You, Fool, Because what he did, He failed, To see, Something critical, And this is where, His eschatology, Comes in, Because eschatology, Is kind of, It's a theological term, For the study, Of what's to come, Kind of the future, When you see people, Predicting the end of the world, You know, You know they've been studying, Their eschatology, But this guy,

We all live with, A sense of eschatology, What is this life mean, But where is it all going, What's coming, And that eschatology, Shapes this life, Well his, Was very erroneous, Because, His life, And again, The connection here, With his wealth, And his goods, It was, Those goods supplied, Much, Much more to him, Than just, A nice, Comfortable existence, It was his life, It was who he was, His identity, His security, Is, All of this, Was built, On, His wealth, What he owned, What he possessed, And what he could accumulate, And so, But his life, Was totally focused, On the here, And the now, Which is why, He focused so much,

On current, Present, Strategies, To build security, To build comfort, To give him all that he needed, To satisfy his soul, So we could describe this, I describe it, And even Paul Tripp, In his, You saw the quote, Before worship, From his book, Sex and Money, He describes this, As a small kingdom view, And a small kingdom view, Is a view of life, That is just here and now, It's just me, And it's just, What I'm going to experience, In my few years, Of this life, It doesn't really go beyond that, We may be believers, We may be Christians, We may think, Yeah, I'm going to die, Yeah, I'm going to see God, At some point, Or I'm going to deal with heaven, Or whatever, But it's still, It's kind of this distant thought, That doesn't enter in, To where we are,

And how we live, And so our ultimate values then, Because we have such a small kingdom view, Is my identity, Success, Comfort, Security, All of that, Is in what I can see, What I can feel, What I can tangibly account for, So, Really, We could say, We could put it a little more strongly, His wealth became his savior, Wealth was giving him, All that he needed, It was giving him his life, It was giving him everything, So, Let me just ask this, How does money, I mean it is kind of a strong statement, But how does money become our savior, Well, There are all kinds of ways,

[16:48] Money, Gives me status, It says I'm something, Money, Allows me, To have a nice home, Down in South Huntsville, And I don't have to live, In a trailer park, In fact, If I did live in a trailer park, You'd probably laugh at me, But there is a status, Of either living there, Or where I'm able to live, In my nice, Comfortable, Quiet, Secure, Low crime neighborhood, Money, Wealth, Gives me, A status, It gives me, The freedom, To plant myself, In the most advantageous, Places, It gives me respect, It's in a community,

Like ours, It is the wealthy, It is the people, With wealth, And because of the wealth, They have power, They are the ones, That are put on boards, They are the ones, That are leaders, In our community, They are the ones, That we look up to, Money gives me privilege, I don't have to drive, An old, Beat up, 1995, BMW, Not a BMW, A Mazda, Some of you drive BMWs, I know, Up until just two years ago, I drove an old Mazda B3000 pickup, And it was great, Particularly being a pastor, Because it had oversized tires, It had a big brush guard, On the front, And a tree shaped dent, On the back tailgate, Which happened because, I left the parking brake off,

One day, And it rolled down my driveway, Yeah, Well, One day I was out driving, And I heard a car commercial, And this car commercial, On the radio, Is basically, The pitch line was, Your car, Says a lot about you, The car you drive, Says a lot about you, And so I started thinking, What does my truck say, About me?

See, Now I don't have to drive, That old pickup truck anymore, I have the privilege, Of driving something nice, It's not a BMW, It's not, The old pickup, My whole identity, To some degree, Gets tied up with money, How much I have in my bank, What I can buy, See, I don't have to buy, My bicycles at Walmart, I can go to the bike shop, And get good ones, Money gives us, The privilege of doing that, And there's something about, Being able to ride, A nice bike down the greenway, Rather than a Walmart bike, That's what money does, So money becomes our savior,

Our identity, Our status, Our respect, Our privilege, All of these things, Instead of, Looking beyond this life, And seeing that these are only, Just temporary things, We put great weight, On that, To be who we are, And so what we are able to buy, We then use, To make a stamp, Or a statement, About this is who I am, And so because, We believe these things, We become consumed, Consumers, But we become consumed, With gathering, Those things, That give us, And create this

identity, And when we are consumed, This way, I mean we can't, Be generous, We can't be, Giving of our stuff, Because if this is what,

[21 : 22] My security is based on, And if this is where, My identity rests, I can't give it away, Because that, Puts me under threat, And all the while, We move, Closer to death, And there's no stopping it, Doesn't matter how much, You accumulate, You're not going to slow it down, We have prepared, Too often, Only, For a temporal, Existence, With no thought, To what's to come, And to, Very sadly, Use a very old cliché, You can't, Take it, With you, So the savior, We have chosen,

Unfortunately, Is inadequate, So how does, Our eschatology, Shape our life, In the present, Well, If this is all there is, Then this is, What we live for, This is, You know, This is what consumes us, And this is for, Not just non-believers, This is for believers, And non-believers alike, Such a view, Simply, Fails, To take into account, All that there is, Because if we did take that into account, If we knew where we were going, We would prepare, A whole lot differently, When I lived in, Eastern Europe, I learned, Quickly, Especially traveling, Between countries, And a lot of the countries, That I traveled to, Were, Well, Most of them, Were former communist countries, They were poor, Broken down, In so many ways, But see, I'm an American, And Americans, I had to learn, To travel, Contrary to the way Americans travel, And that was to travel really light, In other words, Not take a change of clothes, For every day, You take, Maybe clothes enough, Last for a week, But they may be the same clothes, Because that's the way, The Eastern Europeans, A lot of them lived, And two, I had to go one place, When I was in Ukraine, That was on the ninth floor, Of one of the old comic condos, And the elevator was broken, And the people that came, And picked me up from the train station, Have the tiny little car, That barely ran, Or they didn't have a car at all, You'd have to get in, Another tiny little car, That was supposedly a taxi, With these monster suitcases, So you learn, I knew where I was going, I knew where I was going to be,

And so I prepared, Sometimes we're preparing in the wrong ways, We're packing our great big suitcases, Heading to a place, Where we're going to have to leave them at the door, So what does your life consist of?

On what are you hoping, To give you meaning, Identity, Security, What are we using, To give us, A sense of value, Too many of us, And again, Myself included, Have chosen a different savior, On a functional level, That really get us nowhere, But there's a flip side of this, It's not just our eschatology, But there's also, Jesus brings out, There's a problem of theology, And that is, There's a problem, With our understanding, Of who God is, Because Jesus now turns, And it's interesting, He makes a turn here, And it's an important thing, Because he's shifting, From talking to the crowds,

[25 : 53] Who are surrounding him, And it's, Luke very specifically says, Now he says to his disciples, Because some of the things, He's going to say to the disciples, Only apply to the disciples, But he's dealing with them, With the same issue, That he's just done, With the bigger crowd, Because unbelievers, And believers alike, Are going to struggle, With greed, And covetousness, But it might show up, In a different way, Where before, He's talking about, Those who actively, Were building their own kingdoms, On the basis of their possessions, And wealth, Here, Now he's dealing with those, Who are anxious, And fearful, Because, Maybe their kingdom, Is threatened, Or, Because, They don't have, What they think, They need to have, So, The illustrations that he gives, He gives two, But they're basically the same,

And in these illustrations, He's working from, Using an illogical argument, That moves from the lesser, To the greater, And so if he, If he shows so much care, And concern, For things of little value, What is he going to do, For those of great value?

And the first one, Is the ravens, The ravens, I don't know, Y'all know what ravens are, Ravens are not clean, Pretty birds, They're scavengers, They are filthy, They are unclean, They are birds, That nobody's going to want, Or avoid, They're going to avoid, But yet, What Jesus says, God provides for them, They don't sow, They don't reap, They don't store, But these ugly, Nasty, Things, God provides, God provides, Regularly, He provides, And if he thinks, They are enough, Value, To provide that much floor, What's he going to do, With you, You,

His own children, And then he goes, And uses the illustration, Of the lilies, And he's referring, To these wildflowers, And if you've ever been, To the Middle East, Especially in, In April, It is an incredible thing, Because there's about, A two or three week period, In Palestine, Where, You know, The rains have come, The spring is now arriving, And now you've got, All these hills, Are all covered, With green, Yellow, All these colors, The grass is up, The flowers are everywhere, And it

is incredible, For about two weeks, Three weeks, If that long, Because soon, The dry wind, From off of the desert, Is going to, Dry everything out, And then all of that grass, Is just going to be, Good for throwing in the furnace, And being burned, But Jesus refers to these flowers, These beautiful, Little, Delicate, Yellow flowers, And they are, Absolutely beautiful, And he said, Solomon himself, The one, That people, Would come to, From all over the world, Just to see and behold, His glory, If Solomon, Solomon has to take a back seat, To the beauty, Of these little flowers, And these little flowers, Are only there, For a few days, And if God chose, If he cared enough for them, To clothe them, With that kind of, Brilliance, And beauty, For such a brief moment, Aren't you, More valuable, Than little flowers?

[30 : 11] The issue here, Is that we have, A major problem, With our theology, Because we have, A very erroneous, View, Of who God is, And we're saying this, On a functional, Level, Not up here, I mean, We know the right answers, Up here, But how we live, Our lives, We live as if, The answers we have, Mean nothing, So when we fear, Over whether, We're going to have enough, Or we fear, When our stuff is threatened, What are we saying, About God?

Well, We're saying plenty, We're, We are saying, That he's uninvolved, That God is just, Out here, In the distance, Somewhere, Out here, And we're much more like, Theists, Where God has just, Put things into motion, And he's kind of, Packed up, And moved out, At best, Watching from a distance, We think, That God, Does not care, God, If you did care, You would be, Providing better, We think, He will not intervene, We think, He does not hold us, In high value, Or maybe, We think, We've been so bad, That God is now, Making us pay, For all the bad, That we've done, I remember, I was in seminary, Going through, A real, Financial crisis, And, In those days, Financial crises, Were pretty, Regular occurrences, But I'd gotten to a place, Where it was just, Getting bad, And I didn't know, What to do, And I remember, Driving down the road, In some ways, Making, Trying to make a bargain, With God, To take off the pressure, It says, Alright God, What do I need to do?

What have I been, Been doing wrong? Do I need to do, This more? Do I need to, Start giving, To the church more? Do I need to, Do this more? What do I need to do?

That's how we think, God operates, Or we finally, Just think we're, Alone, And we gotta, Fend for ourselves, There is nobody, There, Fear, And so, If this is, What we think, About God, Fear is going, To be characteristic, It's gonna be characteristic, Of our experiences, Because we have no security, We have no sense, Of having anyone, Watching over us, It's all up to us, We are basically, On a functional level, Orphans, And all we have is us, And fear, Then drives us, To a very self-centered, Self-protective, Existence, But the funny thing is there,

[33 : 51] Jesus says, You know, All your fears, All your anxiety, You're not gonna add, One more hour, To your life, He could have said, Actually, It's gonna take, A lot more than that, Off your life, So why are we so, Anxious, And then he brings, The cure, And he straightens, Our theology, And it's in verse 32, I love this, He says, Fear not, Little flock, For it is your father's, Good pleasure, To give you, The kingdom, I wanna break that, Phrase down, Just a bit, He said, Fear not, Little flock, That phrase, Little flock, Is a very, Affectionate, Term, It's very endearing, You have this, Shepherd, Who sees, It's more like, A flock of, Not just a flock,

Of adult sheep, But he's looking at, A flock of little lambs, You know, And, Little lambs are, Just downright cute, And you wanna cuddle with them, You wanna play with them, You wanna hold them, And, He says, Dear little flock, That's the way, He's looking at us, And he goes on, And he says, It is your fathers, Your father, This is not a distant relative, This is not somebody that's out there somewhere, Who does not engage, This is your father, And Jesus has already been talking about, Particularly in chapter 11, That theme of, The father, If you know, Who are evil, Know how to give good gifts, To your children, How much more, Will your father in heaven, Give his spirit, This is your father, But then he goes on, And he says, It is your father's, Good, Pleasure, Is that the way we see God?

Or do we see him, As some kind of, Grinch, That just kind of answers, Our prayers, With little, Tastes of things, Just gives us little bits here, Little bits there, Very begrudgingly, Gives us things, That's not what Jesus says, It's your father, Christmas for me is, And I may have shared this with you, Is one of the most frustrating times of the year, Because I have four children, Now I've got, Four daughters and sons-in-laws, I got nine grandchildren, Christmas is getting expensive, Because, I love my grandkids, And I love my kids, I want to, Give them, Really good things,

And what's frustrating is, I don't have that kind of budget, But that's the heart, Of an evil father, Our heavenly father, Isn't limited by budget, And if, Me being evil, Know how to give good gifts, To my children, How much more, It's his good pleasure, To give us, And then what is he going to give us, That last phrase, It's his good pleasure, To give us, The kingdom, Not just little pieces, He's given us everything, Like Paul says in Ephesians 1, Blessed, Blessed be the God and Father, Of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us, With every spiritual blessing,

[38 : 17] In the heavenly places, In Christ, In other words, He's given it all, He didn't hold back, One thing, One crumb, He's given it all, So if that's all true, Which it is, Why do I fear?

So what's the cure? For greed, For covetousness, Jesus goes on to say, Well, It's generosity, Because if this is true, About your father, And it is, And if he has given us, This much, And he has, Then, We can be free, To give whatever, We have, Away, Because it doesn't, Detract from the bottom line, It adds to it, It adds to it, Actually, When God calls us to give, Sometimes we think, Oh, That's just a burden, That we have to bear, So God's work can happen, No, What he's doing, Is giving us, A gift, That is a safeguard, And a protection, Around our hearts, Because our giving, When we give stuff away, It is saying, I don't put my security here, I don't put my trust here, This is not the source of my identity, It's not the source of anything, That gives me life, My life has nothing to do with this, My life is full, Apart from this, And so to guard our hearts, To protect us, He calls us to give, To give out of, All that he is, For us, So the question really is, At the end, What do you treasure?

What do you love? What do you love the most? What are you giving your life for?

What are you working hardest to gain? What we treasure in this life, What we pursue in this life, Is a pretty good indication, Of what our hearts truly treasure.

[41 : 07] And see, This is the thing about being Christian, For those of you who are, Not in Christ, Who are maybe considering, Christ, I mean really, What you possess, What you own, Is all that you have, And I would recommend to you, I mean if, If you're going to stay there, Then you need to work hard, And gather up your goods, But it's not going to do you, One bit of good, In the end, Because there is a day, We will die, There is a day, We will meet, The judge, In all that we've acquired, Will belong to somebody else, Who will then pass it along, To somebody else, You will die one day, And all your work, Is going to be in vain, If money is your savior, But there's another option,

We can turn to the one, Who is adequate, We can turn to the one, Who is a real treasure, To the one, Who has given himself, For us, So that we, Can have it all, There is one, Who has given us life, Through his death, And he now, Invites us, To come, Come and treasure, The only savior, That is adequate at all, To satisfy our hearts, And to give us real pleasure, You know, That's why we, We come to this table, And here, We have, An example,

Clearly, Of our father's, Good pleasure, You think, He doesn't care, You think he's holding back, What Paul says in Romans 8, 32, It says, He who did not spare, His own son, But gave him up for us all, How will he not now, With him, Freely give us all things, So what our father, His good pleasure, Has given us, Is Christ, He has given us a savior, Who went to his death, So that we, Can be forgiven, And have life, He has given us the keys, To the eternal kingdom, Where we will enjoy, All that is his, If you're hungry,

If you're tired, Of worshiping, These cheap, Inadequate saviors, Come, To this table, This table, Is for those, Who say, I need Jesus, I long for Jesus, Now if that's not you, Then I would just encourage you, To sit in your seat, And as the others come, To contemplate your life, Contemplate, What you treasure most, And whether it is going to be, Adequate for you, And then turn to Jesus, In repentance, But for those of you, Who believe, Who trust Jesus, Come to the table, For the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread,

And after he'd given thanks, He broke it, And gave it to his disciples, Saying, This is my body, Which is for you, Eat this, In remembrance of me, And in the same way, He took the cup, After supper, Saying, This cup, Is the new covenant, In my blood, Which is shed for many, For the forgiveness of sins, Do this as often, As you drink it, In remembrance of me, For as often, As you eat of this bread, You drink of this cup, You proclaim the Lord's death, Until he comes, This is the gift, Of our pleasing father, A gift of life for you, So the host team, Is going to, Usher you down, To the various stations, In the front, And then also in the back, Come, To the feast of grace, That we find in Jesus, Let me pray for us,

[46 : 23] Father would you, Make these little tastes, Of food, A little taste of bread, A little taste of juice, Would you turn it into, A feast of grace, That we might taste, Your goodness for us, And let it wipe out, The fears, Or our need to run, Anywhere else, Feed us we pray, In Jesus name, Amen, For more information, Visit us online, At southwood.org, Amen, Amen, Father would you, O,