

# Consumed By A Craving For More

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Well, last week, the last time we saw each other, I was preaching a sermon and then hitting the road to fly down to Florida with my mother's passing.
- I just had surgery that Thursday on my elbow, so I'm still a little limited. I had a follow-up on Friday, follow-up appointment, and he said, just be careful not to use your arm.
- And I said, it's okay if I gesture a lot. And he said, well, what do you do for a living? I said, I'm a pastor. And he said, oh, okay, I get it. I do speak with my hands. He said, that's fine, but I won't be throwing any tables and chairs around after the service.
- We do need some of you to stick around and help with that, to set up for tonight's meal. I hope you come tonight. It's a wonderful opportunity for us to be together and to do that. But last week when I spoke, I think I was still in shock.
- I just found out the previous morning that my mother had died. And so I came and I preached. And I don't know if you could tell or not. If you couldn't tell, that's the Lord's work, not mine.
- [ 1 : 0 9 ]     And I got on the plane. And as I got on the plane to go down to Florida, and there was no service. There was no funeral. My mother didn't want one.
- And that was kind of odd for us. But we, you know, that's what it was. And so there wasn't even a request that I come. But I just felt like it was necessary that I do that, to go and be with my brother and my sister.
- And as I was flying down, I opened up my Bible and was looking at the passage for this Sunday, for today.
- Just thinking, you know, I'm going to be busy for a few days down here. I'm going to get a jump on things. And I kind of knew already where I'm going. It's one of the nice things about preaching through a book of the Bible, is you kind of know what your next subject is already in advance.
- And I read the passage, and as you will see, this passage spoke directly into what I was about to experience with my brother and sister.
- [ 2 : 1 8 ]     And it spoke of, and I don't want to jump the gun, but I was getting ready to experience this passage, this parable, firsthand, right there in front of me.
- And I was like, okay, Lord, there must be something in here for me that you want me to learn from this. And, oh, boy, was there. It was amazing to go down and to be a part of our family, our little family.
- And now it's just my brother, my older brother, my older sister, and myself. And as many of you kind of know how this works, that when your parents and the last of your parents passes away, goes to be with the Lord, you kind of have to step up in a way that you hadn't thought of before.
- And what I saw with my brother and in particular with my sister too, my brother just blessed me so incredibly to see him just kind of blossom into this patriarchal role for our family in a way that I don't know if I wasn't expecting.

I probably should have expected it, but he was just so, he had his mind together and he led us in prayer.

[ 3 : 44 ] And he wanted to make sure that everything that we did, we did in a way that was right, that was honoring to God, while at the same time honoring what my mother wanted and our parents wanted from all of what was happening with all of what you go through when your parent passes away.

And I was just so blessed by that. I've been so blessed to be a part of a family that didn't grow up with this. I grew up in a Catholic home.

My dad was the first of our family to become a true follower of Christ. When he submitted his life to Christ, I was a junior in high school.

My brother and sister were already out of the house. And so I got to see some of this transition in my dad's life. Transformation is the better word from old to new. My dad was, I'll say it this way, and it's not going to sound very kind, but he was drunk.

He was a drunk. He was a brawler. He beat us as kids, beat his wife at times, and played religion.

[ 5 : 03 ] Looked the part, but did not love the Lord. And so when he came to Christ, it was a complete transformation that I couldn't explain.

Even as an unbeliever myself, I couldn't explain it. I was playing the part of a good Catholic. I was going to church and all of that, but it didn't mean that my life was his, that it belonged to the Lord.

And so when my dad became a Christian, we didn't know what to do with that. We didn't know how to handle that. My dad would get mad, but he wouldn't hit us anymore.

He wouldn't have his outbursts anymore. And it's like, what is going on with dad? And he was a drunk, but I remember coming home from school one day and watching him pour all of his booze out into the kitchen sink.

And there was a lot of booze there. He had quite the bar in our basement. And my first thought was, hey, I didn't say it out loud, but like, dad, that's a lot of good booze.

[ 6 : 04 ] What are you doing? That was my perspective. And over time, I was next. And then my mother and eventually my sister and my brother, we all became followers of Christ.

And there was something that showed up on our kitchen table before I became a Christian, before I knew even what was happening. There was this old paperback Bible. Well, actually, it was pretty brand new back then.

Good News Bible. It was a translation that the Catholic Church approved of. And so we had this on our kitchen table along with a copy of our daily bread. Some of you are familiar with that little booklet, our daily bread booklet.

And so every day, even before we became Christians, we started going through these daily bread things because that's what dad did. And he was encouraging us to do the same thing.

And through the years, my mother is the one who was the writer. And you can kind of see how she wrote through all of this. There's been at least one more version of this that my sister has that replaced this Bible because this one got so worn out and lost the back cover.

[ 7 : 15 ] But she would write things like, God always comes first when we need it. God always comes through just when we need it, not when we think we need it.

Some of the things we pray for, we don't get it because that's not what we needed. God knows. God knows.

God knows. God knows. God knows. What did I get to be a part of this? What did I do to deserve this? And I didn't. It's all because of his goodness to me and his grace in my life, and I have no other explanation for that.

And our family, because of that, has been so radically changed. so that when we come to a point in time like this, instead of it being overwhelmed with grief, there's a joy that I have even in my tears.

My tears are not tears of sorrow. They're tears of joy, which is hard to explain. Someone asks you why you're crying but at the same time smiling.

[ 8 : 51 ] Explain that. How does that work? And that's what's at stake here. That's what happened. That's been my experience.

So we find ourselves in the Gospel of Luke in this instance that reflects exactly what I just went through this week and in perhaps the opposite direction.

And so here is the first verse from our passage. Someone in the crowd. Now remember, the crowds are massive. They're stepping on each other. They're so massive. This part of the world doesn't see this kind of thing happening.

These kind of crowds don't gather for things like this, especially in a Roman-occupied area. It just doesn't happen. But here is Jesus preaching and performing these miracles as he is on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified.

So we have this drumbeat. Don't forever forget. Now, ever since Luke 9, verse 51, this drumbeat of the kingdom of God is at hand.

[ 10 : 00 ] The kingdom of God is at hand. And it's getting louder and it's getting louder. And we don't want to forget that. And as he is just finished with some teaching and these crowds are gathering in, Jesus takes a moment to gather his breath, perhaps to share another story, and this guy speaks up to ask a question.

Jesus, wait a minute, let me get a word on edge. Hold on. Jesus. Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, so he doesn't call him Jesus.

He calls him Teacher. Not Lord, not Master, but Teacher. As in how you would address a rabbi. Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

I didn't say that to my brother. That was the furthest thing. But imagine, I don't want to be this guy. Right?

Because here is Jesus, the Messiah, on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified. And nobody knows that. Nobody understands that.

[ 11 : 19 ] Nobody gets that. But this guy is about as clueless as you can get because when you have the Lord of all the universe standing right in front of you, this is the question you got?

This is the topic you want to bring up? Lord, I don't want to be this guy. Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

Now, understand, this was not uncommon. They didn't have a lot of court systems and things going on. And so the rabbis would often perform the function of someone who would be like a judge or an arbiter in a case.

And someone would come to a rabbi and make this kind of an appeal. An inheritance law was a big deal. Big deal then. Big deal now. Big deal now. And so he comes and this is his topic.

This is what he wants to bring up. And inheritance law in Jewish understanding was quite interesting in the sense that it was very common practice.

[ 12 : 24 ] It was prescribed in the Old Testament law this way, that the oldest brother, the oldest brother would receive a double portion of the inheritance.

And then whatever siblings were there then would then just get a regular portion. So you take the whole inheritance, divide it up, but the oldest brother, not oldest woman, by the way, not the oldest sister.

That's just how it worked in this culture. And part of the reason why, it wasn't just like, oh, it's really good to be the older brother. That's not what this was about.

It was about the idea that the oldest brother would also have the responsibility that came with the family business, the family farm, and the family itself, keeping the family together.

If the mother was still alive, then the oldest brother would have to provide for taking care of his mother. She would go under his charge.

[ 13 : 27 ] If there were any unmarried sisters, they would be placed in his charge. And he would be charged to do whatever it took to keep the family business or the family farm together.

The last thing that in this culture that they wanted to do, if they owned a farm, was to separate the parcels of the farm out. They wanted to be able to keep that together. And so whatever that he would have to do to sell property, to raise funds, to make sure that the other siblings were provided for in the inheritance, that's what he would do.

He was charged with doing. And so that was the typical thing. But for whatever reason, the younger brother is coming along and saying, hey, this is not being done either in a timely fashion, either the other older brother is holding on to the portion or the other older brother has some disagreement with the younger brother.

We don't even know the circumstances here. We just know that, hey, this guy wants Jesus to step in and provide some wisdom or actually just an answer in some way.

But Jesus said to him, man, this would be like calling him friend or something like that. It's a friendly term. In our kind of vernacular, it's like saying, man, almost that way when you see what Jesus responds.

[ 14 : 55 ] Who made me a judge or arbitrator over you? I'm not the one. What are you doing here? So Jesus, he knows what he's doing and he's going to stay on message, right?

He's going to keep speaking and teaching according to what he has been called to do, what his mission is to do. He's on his way to Jerusalem. He's on his way to the cross.

He's going to teach things that matter and that's exactly what we have here. And think about this again. When you look back at this first statement here, it's not a question.

I don't know if you noticed that. There's not a question mark there. It's teacher, tell him. Just tell him. Tell him what I want you to tell him. Not a question of, hey, my brother, can you fix?

No, it's tell my brother to do. Can you imagine telling Jesus? By the way, there are some Christians who kind of live their life that way with the Lord. They tell God.

[ 16 : 02 ] And there are some preachers who say that that's how you ought to pray. Tell God what you want. Tell him. You know, he takes orders. And I don't know where that comes from, but it's a mindset.

We'll see. So, I'm not your judge or arbitrator. That's not it. And he said to him, first thing is a command.

And then from the command, there's going to come a principle that the command is based on. So, the command is this. And again, Jesus is staying on message here.

And he's getting to the heart of the matter here. That's what's happening here. Jesus is cutting to the core. Take care and be on guard against all covetousness.

Take care and be on guard against all covetousness. Now, let's do some definitions here so that we understand where we're going here. When Jesus said take care, what he's actually saying, the idea of this word here, is to be on the lookout.

[ 17 : 08 ] Be perceptive. Look around. Be observant as you look around. Don't just, you know, like a horse with blinders on, just stay focused on your own self.

But look around and take notice of what you see happening in the world and to people around you. And that's one thing that I have done over the years.

Being a pastor, I'm often involved in people's time of grief when someone passes. And unfortunately, I have to say that oftentimes, there is problems.

There are, some of you know exactly what I'm talking about. When someone passes away, there's someone in the family or a group of people in the family who will raise a stink, raise a problem, because of the way things have been adjudicated.

And they don't like it. And it's ugly. And families break up as a result of someone older, an older one, an older parent passes away.

[ 18 : 15 ] And it's a very sad one when you see that happening. So be, take care, be observant, post a guard. That's what, to be on your guard means to literally, post a guard, stand guard over your heart over this issue.

So be observant, look around, watch your own heart, be on guard over what's happening in your own heart. Why? Because of this word covetousness.

Other translations use the word greed. It fits. And the title of my message this morning fits as a definition for this as well.

It's a craving for more. A craving, unsatisfied craving for more.

I just, just need more. More. We strive for that. We want more.

[ 19 : 18 ] And it doesn't matter what culture you're in. It doesn't matter what generation you're in. We have this desire, this craving for more stuff.

More money. We might call it security. We might call it a bank account. We might, we just want more and more.

And it doesn't matter how wealthy you become. one of the warnings that we have in scripture is that we always want more.

Ecclesiastes 5.10 says it this way, whoever loves money never has enough. Doesn't matter how much you have, right? Because if you're, if you're sitting at a certain bankroll and, and this is how much money I make per year, you're, you're always looking up above you and saying, well, that next level.

You might not look at like the, you know, Jeff Bezos's of the world and the Zuckerbergs and all those kind of people and think, well, I don't, I don't need that. But the next level, I want that.

[ 20 : 28 ] I need that. If I could just have that. And then, what happens is, over the lifetime of your career, you do reach that. Some people, many people perhaps, reach that level.

And when they reach that level that, you know, 10 years ago, they thought, well, if I could just reach this level, man, I could be so happy. If I could just have, this, you know what the amount is, by the way?

It's staggering how little the amount is. But it doesn't matter if you make \$30,000 a year, if you make \$80,000 a year, if you make \$150,000 a year, if you make \$300,000 a year, the amount that we're looking for is just \$11,000 more.

\$11,000, doesn't matter which, where, where you fall on that pay scale. You just, you just think, if I had \$11,000 more, that's less than \$1,000 a month more, that's what, that's when I'll be content.

That's, and then you reach that, and guess what? No, I didn't, no, I just, I just need, whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. It's vanity, it's meaningless.

[ 21 : 31 ] It's just how we are. It's built in. Matter of fact, you go back to Adam and Eve, this is kind of what the serpent, part of what he was promising Eve is, Eve, don't you just want a little bit more?

God's only given you this much. Don't, don't you just want a little bit more? But, that's, that's how we all are. Now, take care.

Take care. Be observant. Listen to what these people, these are some of the wealthiest men our country has ever seen, and this is from a hundred years ago.

So, Vanderbilt. The management of \$200 million is enough to kill someone, he said. And, and some of you are thinking, I'd like to try.

think about that. John Astor, the first multi-millionaire in American history, wrote, I'm the most miserable man on earth.

[ 22 : 41 ] Is that what we want? No. Rockefeller said late in his life, I've made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness.

listen. Be observant. Listen to what they're telling you.

Listen to what the scriptures are saying. And then Henry Ford, near and dear to Michigan, late in his life, he said, I was happier when I was a mechanic.

mechanic. We have some mechanics in the room. Henry Ford would say, it's a happier place to be than someone with millions.

Enjoy it. Enjoy what you have while you have it. So, this is the command part.

[ 23 : 51 ] Here's the principle. Take care, be on your guard against all covetousness and greed, craving for more. For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

What Jesus is saying is that real living, real, what matters in life, has nothing to do with what you possess.

It's not what it's about. And that runs counter, again, to every culture, every generation. Do you know how much money is spent on advertising?

I mean, it's in the billions, maybe trillions by today, I don't know. I mean, it's a ton of money, right? Tons and tons of money is spent on advertising. Why? To convince you, you need more.

Right? To make it so that you crave more. So that you can afford the things that the people who are just above you are able to afford. That's how it works.

[ 24 : 59 ] But you know who they target the most? Kids. Kids. If you look at the breakdown, the massive amount of advertising that's being done is being done to elementary aged kids.

I don't know how they studied this, but they studied this. Any of you, some of you have a two-year-old right now. How many of you have ever had a two-year-old?

I want to ask you if you remember what it was like when you were two-year-old. You won't remember that. But you might remember your kid when they were two years old, right? Ever had a two-year-old? Your kids, by the time they're two years old, the studies show, they already know brand logos.

And while they're riding in mommy or daddy's shopping cart in the grocery store, they already know at two years old the cereal they want, the Pop-Tarts they want, all the stuff that's good for you, right?

But that's what they want. And then as we get older, we know which brand of truck we want, right?

[ 26 : 24 ] We even argue about which brand of truck we want. No, I'm kidding. Any opinions about which truck brand we want?

or which gun manufacturer or whatever toy or whatever item that you're looking for next on your list that we want, we're influenced by the ads, by the stuff.

I didn't mean to pick on you guys. it's okay. Listen, the problem, and don't misunderstand what I'm saying here.

It's having stuff is not the problem. The problem is not having possessions. So if you have some nice possessions, we're going to see in just a moment, praise the Lord.

They come from Him, enjoy them. If you're not enjoying what you have, that's not good either. Because the Lord is the one who's given these and enjoy it.

[ 27 : 46 ] The problem is not in what we possess. The problem is in what possesses us. And what possesses so many of us is the craving for more.

than never being satisfied with what I have. So Jesus, tell my brother. So Jesus then tells them a parable.

The parable is not doing the guy any good at all. But Jesus is not thinking about the one guy. He's trying to teach all of us. We're a part of this crowd now that's gathered to hear Jesus.

And that's what he's after. And we best pay attention to it. Because it can impact your life greatly. If you would pay attention to what he's going to teach in this parable.

He told them a parable saying the land of a rich man produced plentifully. and he thought to himself. He thought to himself.

[ 28 : 54 ] Is that a dangerous word? He thought to himself. I want you to notice here he's not including God in any of this.

This is not a prayer. This is a thought to himself. He's literally praying to himself. himself. It's what he's doing. And as he's praying to himself.

As he's thinking to himself. I want you to count how many of the eyes and the my. I and my. That you see.

And to make it easy for you. I've highlighted them. Okay. The correct answer is six and five. Just to make it easy.

I don't want to make you feel like you're doing math here. And I'm like oh I lost you. 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.

[ 29 : 54 ] Nice problem to have. Right? It's nice. He said I know. I will do this. I will tear down my barns and I will build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and all my goods.

And he goes and I will say to my soul soul you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax. You guys know the rest.

Eat, drink, and be merry. By the way, there's nothing wrong with those. Nothing wrong with relaxing.

Nothing wrong with eating or drinking or being merry. That's fine. You can do those things. But you do them without God? Now understand, in their world, the world that Jesus is teaching this parable, it's maybe a little different today.

We don't necessarily make the assumptions that people did back then. But people back then, the assumption was, and this is because the old covenant kind of went there and kind of taught this.

[ 31 : 06 ] That if a man is honoring God with his life, that if a man is living for the Lord and living an obedient life, that this is God's reward for that life of obedience.

That's what the old covenant promised. That if you did it God's way, if you loved him and served him and obeyed him, that he would, you know, make your wife pregnant and happy and you'd have little babies all around and kids and cattle and your cattle would have little ones and your sheep would have a bunch of little ones and your crops would all be healthy and grow.

If you had to go to battle, you'd win those battles. That was the promise, the Old Testament promise. So people are talking about this guy in this parable and thinking, oh, this is honorable man.

You would think that if you saw this guy's obituary in the newspaper, which, do they still have those? what would it be?

What, what, how, how, what, what, can, how would you like to read your obituary before it happened? Would that, would that be weird?

[ 32 : 17 ] That'd be, that'd be kind of unsettling maybe? This guy, who asked the original question way back, verse 13, gets a little glimpse of his obituary ahead of time.

This guy, who, look at what Jesus says, but God said to him, fool. First word of his obituary is fool, not, oh, blessed by God, oh, here lies so and so, he's so blessed by God.

No, it's fool, fool. That's his, that's his, now, oftentimes when you see the word fool, immediately our mind goes to what?

When we hear fool, what do we think of? What are some words, synonyms for fool? Words that, what is it? Clown? What else? Idiot?

Good, these, you guys know some good words. What's another one? Bonehead? I heard bonehead. What's another one? Stupid, that's the one I'm going for.

[ 33 : 19 ] I like, for something, I like to say the word stupid because I say it that way. in this context, that's not the idea.

It's not that this guy is not intelligent. It's not that he doesn't have his numbers all lined up and in a row and looking good. They do.

it's, it's the same idea as in Psalm 53, one. The fool has said in his heart what?

Literally, if you look at the text, the fool has said in his heart, no, God. The words there and is are supplied by the translators.

to make it flow better. But literally, the text says the fool has said in his heart, no, God.

[ 34 : 31 ] That can be one of two things. Either he's saying God doesn't exist, which is kind of how the translators are assuming that that's what that means. But the second one is, I think God's there and I'm willing to tell him no.

Either one. Translate it however you want there. It's not a good place to be, especially if you're this guy.

If you're the main character in this parable, you don't want to be this guy, this kind of fool. Because he's saying no to God. I don't care about God.

I don't know if God exists, but God, I don't care if you exist. and what makes it worse is this night.

Your soul. Oh, say to my soul, oh soul, you've got so many goods laid up for so many years. Eat, drink, and be married.

[ 35 : 41 ] Just relax. No, your soul is mine. God says tonight. And the things that you've prepared, whose then will they be?

You think his family, right? You probably have the same mindset. What a waste. What a waste. And ultimately, we don't know.



But not his. That's the point. Not going to be his. See, the problem for this man in this parable, this no-named man, let's call him fool.

fool. That's what God called him. The problem is this. So is the one who lays up treasure for himself a fool?

So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. doesn't care about God.

[ 37 : 09 ] I want you to notice that this man's problem was not his wealth. If you're sitting here today and you got a few bucks in the bank and a nice house and don't start feeling guilty or don't start feeling like, oh, the preacher's coming for me today.

No, no, no, no, no. Nor was it his need for a bigger barn. You might be a farmer today. I'm looking over here, Jacob.

You might be a farmer today and feel like you need a bigger barn. Nothing wrong with that. Build a bigger barn. That's not the problem. Understand this.

Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a fool just devours it all. It's it all up. It's kind of like a kid, like, you know, here's a treat for you.

You can have this little bit of a treat now, or if you wait ten minutes, you can have this bigger, funner, better treat, and they can't handle it.

[ 38 : 13 ] And many of us don't want to admit we're like the little kid. Said another way, this is the New Living Translation, same verse, Proverbs 21, 20, the wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get.

Actually, in our world, fools spend what they don't have. Hey! Hey! As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who understands those of you who have some means, and quite frankly, compared to the world population and world history, we're all doing pretty stinking well, thank you very much, who provides us with everything, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

Enjoy it! If you're not, that's kind of a slap in the face to God. It's good. It's good. It's a good thing, Ecclesiastes 5:19, to receive wealth from God, and the good health to enjoy it.

how's that? To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life, this indeed is a gift from God. Understand, one of the biggest proponents of the prosperity gospel, which is a twist on what Jesus is teaching, is this idea in a New Testament model that God wants you wealthy and healthy and everything just wonderful for you.

That was a promise given to Old Testament Israel. It's a promise that's awaiting us in heaven. Talk about perfect wealth and perfect health, but we're promised in this life, this New Testament life, persecution, hardship, difficulty.

[ 40 : 10 ] And sometimes we can see people who have been blessed with many riches and some who have gone through extreme poverty, both blessed by God, both in right relationship to God.

And how do we explain that? It's because we have the richness, this is going to sound like, I don't know, I think I'd rather have the other one. Think about this. We have been given God himself, the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

Which would you rather have? and that reveals your heart. Which would you rather have?

I have God within. I have more riches than anything this world can offer. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life, this is indeed a gift from God.

It is indeed. Enjoy it while you have it. here was the problem, his greed and his spiritual poverty.

[ 41 : 24 ] well, Pastor Rich, that's not me.

That's not describing me because, you know, I feel like I honor God. I mean, I bring my family to church and I even write a check or went to the church and yeah, so did they.

so did this guy, guy in the parable. He did that too. You're going to church. I mean, as a pastor, do I love that you go to church? Of course I do.

I like that you're coming to church. But the reality is you're coming to church means nothing unless you're understanding that you're coming to church is what helps you to grow in your relationship with the Lord, which that is what matters.

So yes, I would tell you come to church. But not because you need to check a list and say I've done this that therefore I'm godly. No. You come to church because we need each other.

[ 42 : 31 ] God said we need each other. Right? I'm kind of built like a loner. No, that's not what God says I need. I need. We need each other.

We need the fellowship. We need the accountability of each other. We do. And we need a right relationship with God to live in relationship with God.

That's what matters. That's what we're looking for. But those who desire to be rich, this is 1 Timothy 6, 9, but those who desire to be rich fall into temptation.

It's the love of money. It's the desire to be rich. It's the craving for more, what Paul is writing about here. they fall into a snare, a trap, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

That's where this leads, to ruin and destruction. That is where our heart is, the love of money, not money itself.

[ 43 : 37 ] It is through this craving, he uses that same word, that some have wandered away from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pangs. This is the kind of pain that we invite, that these millionaires from generations ago would testify as, I've got the millions, I'm not happy, I'm miserable.

Oh, I'd like to try. You don't know what you're saying. So let's talk about this.

The top three early warning signs of greed. We'll do these last few pretty quick here. The top three warning signs of greed. Greed is something that we don't often see in ourselves, but we find it very easy to see greed in other people.

We don't see it in the mirror, but we see it in other people. We can sense when someone else, well, that person's greedy. Oh, they just bought a new boat. Oh, yep, they have a problem with covetousness.

Yep, they sure do. Look at yourself. Okay, here's number one. When my self-esteem or my self-worth is based on my possessions, if I can just have that one thing more, that one thing more, I'll feel better about myself.

[ 45 : 05 ] I'll think of myself as being more worthy. If I could just get a little bit more. For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. That's not what your life is about.

So, pursuing that's not going to make it any better. When my security is based on my net worth, this is what I have in the bank, right? You know, if I just have this much money, money, then I will feel secure.

I will feel like I can cover for everything. And that's what this guy thought. Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. He thought that he thought wrong.

James chapter 4, verse 13. Come now, you who say today or tomorrow we'll go to such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make profit. Yet you do not know. You don't know what tomorrow is going to bring.

your soul may be required of you tomorrow. You don't, you just don't know. And then here's another one, early warning sign.

- [ 46 : 11 ] When my stuff, my stuff, when my stuff is not just stuff that I have or stuff that God has entrusted me with, but when my stuff is my stuff, do you see the difference there?
- Do you see that? My barns, my goods, my stuff. That's a problem. That's a problem.
- And then some simple remedies for greed. This is good for you guys to take home. Never look down on those with less. that's going to be a problem.
- You might be making, you know, 30, 50,000 dollars a year and you're looking down at someone who makes less than you. That's not going to serve you well as you rise in the ranks, ever, for you to look down at other people who have less than you do.
- There's an arrogance there that betrays what's happening in your heart. If you're looking down on people with less than you, my guess is you're looking up at people ahead of you financially and maybe even feeling a little intimidated.
- [ 47 : 40 ] Maybe feeling like a little in awe of that's what I want. Beware of that.
- Plan on, number two, plan on losing it or leaving it behind. Actually, I've got to show you this verse here. Charge them not to be haughty.
- There's a number of verses. Actually, on your note sheet, there's a number of verses you can look up that speak to this issue. Being proud, being arrogant, being haughty. Haughty is not a word we use in our world today.
- Is it? Haughty. We're either talking about some girl we think is attractive or we're thinking they're saying naughty. No, we're saying haughty.
- H-A-U-G-H-T-Y. Haughty. It's a form of arrogance that even is worse than that. It's bad. It is the idea of looking down on, you heard of people with long noses, like looking down on people, right?
- [ 48 : 45 ] That's what's in view here. Plan on losing it or leaving it behind. Plan on losing it or leaving it behind. That's what happened to our main character in the parable, the things that you have prepared, whose will they be?
- And then Paul in 1 Timothy mentions, nor set their hopes on the uncertainty. Don't set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches because it is uncertain. they can go away or you can die.
- Lead with generosity. Lead with generosity. This was Paul's encouragement to those who had means in 1 Timothy 6.
- That whole chapter basically covers this. When he's addressing those with means, those with some wealth, he says to them, they are to do good with what they have.
- To be rich in good works as well. Not just throw money at it, but live a life of doing good things as well. To be generous and ready to share. Storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take a hold of that which is truly life.
- [ 50 : 05 ] By the way, that's what life consists of, serving others, being generous. Absolutely. Proverbs 3, 9, 10, honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your produce.
- Then your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will be bursting with wine. Understand, this is not a promise, this is a proverb. This is generally speaking how life works. That when you're generous, God's going to honor that, God's going to bless that.
- It's not a guarantee, it's just a statement of how life works. And then sometimes I get asked this question, Rich, how much should I give?
- And usually this is in the context of a tithe. The word tithe usually comes out of someone's lexicon at that point. And how much should I give, Rich?
- tithe? And I am of the belief that a tithe is an Old Testament principle. That the New Testament principle is something different. I would say something more, but I don't necessarily mean more than 10%.

[ 51 : 12 ] I'm saying the number, that's not what God cares about. Here's what God cares about, and I'll show you this. This is from 2 Corinthians chapter 9. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give.

Not reluctantly, or under compulsion. If you've got some preacher up there twisting your arm behind your back saying you've got to give more, you've got to give more, you've got to give. Man, Paul says no, don't respond to that.

If they're trying to guilt you into it, no. If this is supposed to be fun, being generous, being giving is supposed to be fun, for God loves a cheerful giver.

You want to know what's fun? Paul's going to tell us here in just a moment. Bear with me. Verse 8, And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you will need, you will abound in every good work.

You know what's fun? It's being a blessing to other people. And those of you who know what that's about, you get what I'm saying here.

[ 52 : 17 ] The idea that God can use me to be a blessing for someone else, absolutely. That's a whole lot better than hoarding it for myself. He goes on in verse 11. This is the fun.

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion. In other words, God's going to bless your generosity with more so that you can be more generous, more giving.

That's the New Testament principle. people. And some people are stuck on, okay, I got to give my 10%, knowing that they have so much more to give.

And I'm not even saying that the extra or whatever it is, I'm not saying that it all belongs here in our coffers. Don't. You might be running across someone on the street who needs a meal, or someone who needs a tank of gas, someone who needs a bill paid because they're down on their hours at work, whatever, whatever.

However God leads you. But here's the point. It's not an arbitrary number. It is, it flows out of your relationship with your Heavenly Father.

[ 53 : 34 ] It flows out of that dynamic that as you spend time with Him and as you know Him, God opens up your eyes to opportunities to be generous that you've never noticed before.

And as you step into those opportunities to be giving and to be generous, God does a work in your heart and in your life that you can't explain and it's like, whoa, God, how can this be so good?

How did I deserve this? love in your love in your relationship with God? And it simply comes out of an act of obedience, an act of love in your relationship with God that says, I want to be a part of God, what you're doing.

And what you're doing is generosity. What you're doing is giving. That's what I want to be a part of. That's where it's at. Last thing, and we're done with this song, but guys, come on up as we're going to sing a song today.

I'll tell you about this in a moment. But on your notes, there's five things, no blanks here, just some simple tests, some questions to ask yourself to see how you're doing on the subject of greed.

[ 54 : 49 ] And so, good questions. it's just Tom.

It's just Tom. That's good. Oh, that's a good song. I told you about my flight down.

Let me tell you about my flight back on Thursday. Thursday night. I'm flying back. And I've got my headphones on, I've got my playlist playing, right?

And in my playlist, I've got some Christian folk music. That's the category that I have, and a bunch of songs that I put in there. And this song comes up. And this song perfectly depicts the opposite of this parable.

Perfectly. And I listen to that song like four times in a row. I'm sitting there on the chair, in my, if you've been flying lately, in my tiny little chair.

[ 56 : 12 ] I've got my headphones on, and I'm crying. But I'm also smiling. What is that?

These were not tears of sorrow or grief. You know, if you would have, if you would have, you know, been on the plane, and, and, and it's how we are on planes now, right?

We don't talk to each other. If someone would say, are you okay? Are you, why are you crying? Why are you? My mother just died. They would, they would understand that, right?

It's not why I was crying. Well, there may have been some of that. But the joy, there were tears of joy.

Because I'm sitting there on this plane, and I'm listening to this song, and I'm thinking, what have I done? That I could have this experience.

[ 57 : 17 ] That I could know you in this way, in this incredibly never, as a young person growing up, would I have thought all that God brought me to where I'm at today.

Never. Wouldn't have even thought about a relationship with a God. But, but to just experience all that had happened that week, to see my brother, to have these remembrances of my mother, and my sister, and my dad, and we joked around the dinner table about, well, I wonder what it's like in heaven now with mom seeing dad again.

Some of you can understand that, right? And we know, I mean, it's not the same. They're not married in heaven, but, and whatever issues there were, they're all gone.

And it's perfect, and it's wonderful, and we're going to be together again. And the great joy in that. And then this song, remember, remember the guy in the parable?

I will say to my soul, soul, oh, wait, wait, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Well, the chorus of this song is the opposite.

[ 58 : 44 ] All my soul needs is, Lord, all your love to cover me, so all the world will see that I have nothing.

Whatever this world offers is nothing without you. There's nothing. And, and it was as if God was opening my eyes and my heart to this, this incredible thing.

I don't need any of this. I don't need any of this. I'm nothing. And the best place, the richest place for anyone to be is right here.

And I was just thanking the Lord that that's where I found myself. And I was like, Lord, just pump this into my veins. I need this message every day of my life.

Every day, remind me, I am nothing without you. Go ahead. I'm going to cry again when he plays this, so. So. Take these hands, lift them up.

[ 60 : 07 ] I have not the strength of praise you near me now. I have nothing. I have nothing.

Without you. Take my voice. Pour it out.

Let it sing the songs of mercy I have found. I have nothing.

I have nothing. Without you. I have nothing.

All my soul needs. It's all your love to cover me.

[ 61 : 11 ] So all the world would see that I have nothing. without you.

So take my body. Build it up. It'd be broken as an offering of love.

For I have nothing. I have nothing. without you.

And all my soul needs is all your love to cover me.

So all the world would see that I have nothing. I have nothing.

[ 62 : 22 ] And I love you. With all my heart.  
With all my soul. With all my soul needs.  
And all my soul needs. And all my strength And all my strength that I can find. All my soul needs.  
Is all your love. Is all your love. Is all your love. To cover me. And all my soul needs. And all my soul needs.  
And all my soul needs. And all my soul needs. And all my soul needs. And all my soul needs. And all my soul needs.  
[ 63 : 27 ] And all my soul needs. And all my soul needs. Here on this earth. And all my soul needs. And all my soul needs. All that you are worth.  
For I am nothing. I am nothing. Without you. Lord, thank you for.  
How good you are. Let us never forget how good. You are.  
How richly. You have blessed us with yourself. That we get to know you.  
Not because of anything that we have done. We can't earn it. We can't be good enough. But because of all that you have done for us.  
[ 64 : 47 ] You provided it all. You sent yourself. Form of your son. Pay the penalty on the cross. That we could have new life. Through his death. So that we could be forgiven. While Jesus received the payment for our sin.  
On himself. So that we could be brought close. And called a son.  
A daughter. And Jesus himself on the cross felt. So forsaken.  
So forsaken. So forsaken. And then Jesus rose again from the dead. What.  
[ 65 : 50 ] Sweet victory. And what sweet promise that we have as a result of it. You've given us so much. And you are so good.  
We love you. In Jesus name. Amen.