

Parables – The Rich Fool – myfishbites.com

Luke 12.13-21

Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'

Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?' 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.' And he told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops."

'Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

'But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" 'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.'

The Parable Summary

The parable is about a rich man who stores up and buys lots of things but doesn't use what he has for God. The parable that Jesus is making is that life isn't about how much we can get – but about what we do with what we have. Jesus also wants us to know that everything that we give and do for him and for his work will be remembered by him and there will be a reward. There's no reward for the stuff that we get for ourselves on earth – the opposite is also true that there is a reward for the things we do for God!

Guard against greed

The first thing Jesus lets us know is that we should be on guard against all kinds of greed.

Can you think of areas of greed in your life? How can we live without being greedy - are there things in your life that you need to change? How can you make changes that last rather than just changing because someone told you to?

Life is more than just having things

The second thing Jesus points out is that life isn't about how much 'stuff' you've got. He says, life isn't found in the abundance of things. This is quite hard in a world where the economy is based on buying things – and we have adverts and people telling us we need all kinds of things that we don't really need.

So the question is how can we live a life that is about more than just having loads of stuff or the latest gadgets? But at the same time - how can we use things like the latest gadgets to help us in our Christian lives and to do things that let people know about Jesus and what he's really like?

It's not how much you have but how you use what God gives

In the parable that Jesus tells us, the rich man has a bumper crop – he has lots of crops – more than he needs. He doesn't know what to do with them and so he builds a bigger barn to store all his crops.

OK, so this is only part of the story. If we only read this bit, we'd think that God was against us having lots of things (having an abundance). But that's not the whole picture. God is not against us having things at all – what he wants us to do is to use what he gives us well.

Some Christians say that God is against us being rich or having things – but that isn't true – although God is not against you living simply if you choose to! For example, it takes money to run a church or a ministry or to give things away to people. Jesus didn't criticise the man in the parable for being rich but because he was foolish with his riches!

In 2 Corinthians 9.8 God says this: And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

We have to remember that it is God who gives us good things – but these are given by God (like the Bible verse says) so that we will have all we need and can therefore be mega-generous in every kind of good work.

How has God been good to you? How can you use what he has given for every kind of good?

What Would You Do?

So here's a big question - you're the rich man and you have loads of money (which is what all the extra the grain would have got him). What would you do with the money? How would you use it in a good way? How can you be 'rich towards God?'

(Be real – don't just say you'd give it all away! Think about the many people Christians through time who have given away money but left their family poor – or given all their time to the church at the expense of their family and this has caused massive problems for them). And remember, God doesn't need your money, so think about the question deeply!

It's All About Me...

The rich man knocked down his old barns and built some bigger barns to store all his grain. As we've seen, God is definitely not against us having stuff and he also wants us to plan for the future. But the rich man wasn't planning for the future in a good way. We learn from the Bible that it was all about him and his selfish ways. He said to himself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'

The rich man was doing what many people do today. He only saw life as being about himself, what he could get, his comfort, his ways of doing things. It was all about him. There was no mention of others or of God. He thought that life was only about the 'here and now' – what he was doing and what he wanted.

Matthew 24.37–39 – When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes.

These are a warning for us to be ready – always ready for Jesus – and to be living a life as much as we can that is always faithful to God and helping others.

What ways can you think of to be ready for the return of Jesus?

The God-shaped hole

But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" 'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.'

The rich man wasn't wise in what he did with his things and he wasn't wise in thinking about God. He'd stored up all this stuff and then suddenly – boom – he died. And what happened to all his stuff? He couldn't take it with him. And he also had to stand before God while God asked him what he'd done with his life...

So many people today want more stuff, more money, more fame or more people to sleep with etc. In many ways you could feel sorry for them because their life is very empty. So many people are looking for love and satisfaction. One famous person who killed themselves left a note saying they just wanted someone to love them. You can get all the money in the world but it doesn't mean anything. We all have a God-shaped hole that can only be filled with God himself.

Are there parts of your life that feel empty? Have you asked God to come and fill those areas? Or do you not know Jesus as the boss of your life? Today is a good day to ask him to come into your heart and change you. Just ask him.