**August 11, 2019 Luke 12:13-21**

***An Investment with Eternal Returns***

**Scripture:** Luke 12:13-21 NRSV

(13)Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." (14)But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" (15)And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." (16)Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. (17)And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' (18)Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19)And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' (20)But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' (21)So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

**Notes:**

1. When has ***greed*** snuck up on you?

#### Our ***relationship*** with God is most important..

### ***Prosperity*** is a gift from God.

## Don’t put emphasis on material ***possessions***.

### What counts is your ***relationship*** with God.

## This parable tells us how to ***define*** life.

### The rich man is ***condemned*** for leaving God out.

## God expects us to give His kingdom ***priority***.

1. Greed is an insatiable desire for something we do not ***need*** .
   1. First, people reject God; finally, they grow to ***resent***or hate God.
   2. Trust Christ alone to ***deliver*** us from destruction.
   3. God's Kingdom should be our top ***priority***

## The Kingdom of God is found in ***relationships***.

### We are fortunate that we have a father in heaven who wants a close ***relationship*** with us.

### What do you long for? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### Long for the ***giver*** and not the gifts.

### Invest in God; an investment with eternal ***returns***

**Transcript:**

My plan was sound. I would go to college, and get the education necessary to start a career. Do my best to get a job in the area where I was trained. Work in this career and save my money so that I may retire and relax the rest of my days. I first thought Architecture was the way to go. I loved to draw houses and floor plans. The work was not extremely difficult and architects are paid very well. Then reality set in, as I was completing applications for college, I read that to get into an architecture school, it was very competitive and extremely limited. In other words, prepare yourself to be denied and choose a secondary major. So I looked and found something else that seemed interesting; Industrial Arts Education, not nearly as competitive, still a not so strenuous occupation, and you only work nine months out of the year.

And like that the wheels were set in motion; I was accepted at both colleges I applied to; not for Architecture, but I did get in to the Industrial Arts program. I made the decision after some discussion with my guidance counselor; I would begin at California State College, later named California University of PA. Throughout my days, there were moments when I slacked off, and times when I thrived. I got into student teaching with the lowest grade possible. I managed to graduate after taking one extra semester of classes. And I then found a job where I would be able to use my education. I was set; but then things began to change

That is pretty much how it is for each of us. We make plans for the future; we get the ball rolling in the direction we want. And then things begin to change, because of events outside of our control, our plans begin to change; we make alternative plans and adjustments in order for us to find the easiest way to accomplish our goals.

Our plans are for a future that we do not know and cannot predict. We plan our days according to our dreams and best wishes; but we fail to stay in alignment with the one who makes all of these things possible. We fail to invest in the one thing that can result in eternal rewards. Today we look at Jesus teaching from Luke 12:13-21, stand with me as we share in the reading of God’s word.

*(13)Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." (14)But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" (15)And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." (16)Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. (17)And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' (18)Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19)And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' (20)But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' (21)So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."*

When has greed snuck up on you? In the parable we find Jesus responding to a request. a request, made for Jesus to tell this man’s brother to share in his inheritance. In the culture of the day the eldest son received a double portion of the inheritance left by his father, while the siblings would receive single portions.If a father and had two sons, the estate was divided 3 ways and the oldest got two parts. So guess which son this is. He is the youngest son. If he is asking this, what does that tell us about his father? His dad has just died. That will set us up for a very significant part of the parable. This shows that he is greedy. From here on we refer to him as the greedy brother. The greedy brother is not following the ideal of living in harmony with his brother. The greedy brother treasured riches more than his relationship with his brother.

Listen to what some modern day people had to say about this issue: "You may have all the money in the world, and yet be a lonely, sorrowing man. (Andrew Carnegie) "Happiness is not based on money and the greatest proof of that is our family." (Christina Onassis) Jesus is pointing to a higher issue a correct attitude toward the accumulation of wealth. Life is more than goods; more important is our relationship with God. Jesus put his finger on the heart of this greedy brother. Possessions Aren't Permanent.

Why is Jesus telling this parable about the rich man who had no greed to a greedy man? Jesus builds up the rich man as a good guy, a content man something that is very rare. This guy is just the opposite of the greedy man. Both of these men thought that life consisted in stuff. Selfishness and self-satisfaction are opposite pulls that are out of balance to God. The man in the parable was already rich. He already had enough for himself; but this year, he had a bumper crop. Isn’t this the way it always is? The rich get richer and the poor get poorer? One gets the impression that the rich man didn’t really work very hard for this. Why does Jesus want us to get that impression? If you get something that you didn’t work for, what is it? It is a gift. Who was this gift from? It was a gift from God. Remember that.

So, what does he do with the surplus? Verse 17 says “The rich man began reasoning to himself” This is significant; in that day everyone went to the city gates to discuss things. This man doesn’t do that. We get the impression that he has no friends, no relationship with anyone. He says, “What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops? This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.” Notice the emphasis on “I” and “my” as he reasons with himself. He did not understand that his prosperity was a gift from God. He forgot that he was a steward and thought that he owned it all.

In vs. 19 he assumes that he will live for a long time, and will enjoy his stuff. But in vs. 20. God enters the scene and says, “You fool.” The rich man thinks many things will produce the good life, yet he’s without life. He is ignorant; God goes on to say, “your soul is required of you.” The word “required” has the idea of paying back a loan. Emphasizing the idea that the man was just a steward of his stuff and not the owner. Then God says, “now who will own what you have prepared?”

What is the connection between the greedy guy’s question and the parable? The greedy guy’s question was concerning his inheritance and the parable ends with a question of the rich man’s inheritance. “Who will own what you have prepared?” We know what will happen; we see it happening with the greedy man. The kids are going to fight over it. It reminds me of Howard Hughes. When he died, there was no will and people fought over his inheritance for years.Jesus says, “So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” There is a major reversal in the parable the rich man ends up being poor to God. Notice the poetic justice. Why does Jesus tell a bunch of poor people about a rich man? How does a rich man story go over? Poor people want bad things to happen to rich people, because they are jealous.

Don’t put your emphasis on material possessions because they don’t last. Greed is wrong, but at the opposite pole, so is self-sufficiency or self-satisfaction. Define life in terms of money and you leave God out of the definition and end up bankrupt. What counts is your relationship with God. The rich man made at least four mistakes: The rich man thought he was the owner of his stuff when he was just a steward, we are just stewards of our stuff; he was worried about the present and forgot about eternity; he was concerned only for the physical and forgot about spiritual things; he treasured stuff more than people and lived an isolated life

This parable tells us how to define life. Most people define life in terms of material possessions, physical fitness or the future. This parable speaks loudly to our generation. Have you been defining life in your career, your house, in terms of what you can do physically, or the assumption that you will live much longer? What is going to happen when you lose one or more of those things? What happens when you get laid off? What happens when you get some disease taking away your physical ability. What happens when you find out you only have six months to live? If you define life in these things, you will be devastated. Having possessions is not wrong, putting your security in them is what is wrong. The rich man is not condemned for being rich. He is condemned for being self-centered, for not using his surplus to help others, for leaving God out of his life.

We must recognize that God expects each Christian to give His kingdom priority. This is the only way to keep possessions from sneaking up and controlling us. God's kingdom relates to the rule or reign of God, both present and future. So by focusing on actions that contribute to God's causes, we can determine what to do with our possessions as well as our time; we can determine who is most important in our life. Think how God has helped you manage your possessions rather than hoard them. Some people pay cash for a used car rather than letting a new car payment eat up the income God provides them; others buy gifts on sale so they can give nicer gifts when holidays roll around; some give the gift of time, spending it with others instead of buying expensive gifts. Why do possessions often seem to be more important than they are? Is your life focused on the temporal or the eternal? What priorities do your calendar and checkbook reveal? What does your life say about the priorities and values of your heart? Is the kingdom of God primary in your life?

The truth is all people need to guard against greed. Possessions are not the most important thing in life. Life is about the relationships, relationships we have, and relationships we don’t have. Would you agree that if we were given the an ultimatum; to choose between the Kingdom of God and possessions, we would choose God? Yet every day we are given this choice in not so subtle ways. And figuring out how to live this choice out. In our everyday life, it is very tricky and very difficult. Choosing what we can do that will be in line with the teachings of Jesus. Should we take a second job in order to live the lifestyle we want or should we change our lifestyle to live within or means?

Should I pay a tithe? And if so should I pay it on the gross of my income, or should I pay it on my bring home pay? And what about what I make under the table, tips and gratuities? What forms of entertainment should I take part in? And should I contribute to charities and what charities do I contribute to? Do I really need to be at the church every time the doors are open? Do I need to be in the worship services? Should I take part in a small group? Is it necessary for me to be involved in the outreaches we have? How much time must I contribute to attendance in church activities, including services, fellowships, studies, and outreaches? If you must ask that means you are concerned about where you stand with Christ, and the impacts of such decisions in your life. Why do you think Jesus pictured greed as something to guard against? Listen to some of the things Jesus says about greed:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. (Matthew 23:25 NIV)

Jesus said "(20)What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' (21)For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, (22)greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. (23)All these evils come from inside and make a man "unclean.'" (Mark 7:20-23 NIV)

Greed is the driving force of every evil thing we have in this world. Mankind stepped into sin by wanting to be equal with God. Throughout time, every time one civilization moves in and conquers another. It is only to satisfy their appetite for more, and their desire to be better than others. Greed is an insatiable desire for something we do not need. What Jesus is pointing to here is that in order to live a life that is right. We must put away our selfish desires; guard against selfish wishes; avoid the part of the human psyche that fuels our passions for what others have.

Paul clearly portrays the inevitable downward spiral into sin in Romans 1:21-32 1st, people reject God; and make up their own ideas of what God should be and do; then they fall into every kind of wickedness: greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. Finally, they grow to resent or hate God and encourage others to do so. God does not cause this steady progression toward evil. Rather, when people reject him, he allows them to live as they choose. God gives them over to or permits them to experience the consequences of their sin. Once caught in the downward spiral, no one can pull himself or herself out.

Sinners must trust Christ alone to deliver them from destruction. Concentrate on the Kingdom, only the kingdom of God is worthy of having priority in our lives. If we remember to pursue God's concerns first in our life, He will be faithful to provide our needs.God's Kingdom should be our top priority and we must commit to living to serve God

# There is this song from the 70’s performed by Harry Chapin called ***The Cat’s in the Cradle***. The song tells the story of a man who had a son. The son grows the father takes on a job to supply his family’s needs. This means he isn’t home much, and the son deeply desires to spend time with his father the son asks “when you coming home dad? To which the father responds, “I don’t know when, but we’ll get together then, you know we’ll have a good time then.

# The son comes into his own and things are changing. Years pass and the father is now able to be at home, but the son is at college. Home from school, the father says, “Son I’m proud of you can you sit for a while?” The son shook his head and said with a smile, “I’d really like dad is to borrow the car keys. See ya later can I have them please” To which the father responds, When you coming home son. I don’t know when, but we’ll get together then Dad, you know we’ll have a good time then.

### This song seems to tell me that we fail to realize what is most important until it is too late. The man is too busy to spend time with his son when his son had the desire to do so. The son is too busy to spend time with his dad, when the dad had the time. People are always placing their priorities in meeting the trivial needs of life; they fail to realize the things that should take priority, the relationships they have with others, especially their family. The relationships they have with the Church, and it’s members. The relationship they have with the one who makes all things possible, Jesus.

### The kingdom of God, not possessions, is to have priority in our lives. we cannot find true happiness by accumulating wealth or possessions. Avoid placing more value in the things you have than in the things God values. Don’t waste your life, giving the majority of your time and effort to the things you want. Do not allow possessions to take priority in your life. You must focus on seeking God's kingdom and being a righteous person. Develop a heart that trusts God for your needs and is free to pursue His will. Put your trust in God's care for you and pursue the things that matter to Him.

### I have learned that the priorities for the Kingdom of God is in relationships. They are: My relationship with my Savior, Jesus Christ, must come before all other things; my relationship with my family, the things that God has placed in our lives and made us responsible for, must come second only to our relationship with Jesus; my relationship and responsibilities within the Church must follow next; all other things must come later.

### We are fortunate that we have a Father in heaven who wants nothing more than to have a close relationship with you.He wants you to make that relationship a priority. What do you long for? Do you long for a closer relationship with the Father? Come to Jesus. Do you long for a closer relationship with your family? Come to Jesus and seek guidance and he will help you get that relationship you long for. Do you long for a less cluttered schedule, for a more secure checking account? Come to Jesus and pray for His guidance and he will show you where you have allowed the world to infiltrate, and where you need to make changes. But it is you that must change. Long for the giver and not the gifts. Don’t invest in stuff. Invest in God and the people he puts in your life; an investment with eternal returns.