

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE

SERMON OUTLINE

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“The Parable of the Rich Fool”

Luke 12:13-21

We often hear the phrase “The American Dream” which is equated with financial success. Everywhere you look, our vision, goals, desires, and plans all run toward the American Dream.

THE POSTER CHILD FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM – is this Parable of the Rich Fool. Let’s look at it this morning with open hearts and ears that will hear what our Lord is saying to us today.

I. THE WOULD-BE FOOL (Vs.13-15)

His interjection was out of sync and disruptive. He didn’t ask Jesus for a reasoned decision regarding the fairness of his claim but just **demanded**, “*Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.*”

Besides, getting one’s legal fair share is not a good thing if one is motivated by a covetous spirit, and Jesus sensed such a spirit here.

A. A Warning V-15a

The word translated “**greed**” here is sometimes translated “**covetousness**” and means the lust to have more than one’s fair share, a boundless grasping after more. It is simply wanting more when we already have enough.

B. A Principle V-15b

Jesus crowned his warning with a life-giving principle. The greedy person lives as if the most important things of life are assured when they have amassed the excessive.

II. The Rich Fool (Vs. 16-21)

The rich man was a farmer, but he represents all human beings who are seduced by “*all kinds of greed.*” He was a success in everyone’s eyes.

A. Foolish Reasoning Vs. 17-18

It seemed to him that building new barns was logical and prudent. In the Greek the personal pronoun “*my*” occurs four times and “*I*” eight times. He was completely self-absorbed. He spoke about “*I*” and “*My*”, and never about “*God*” or “*Others.*” There is certainly nothing wrong with following good business principles, or even with saving for the future. Greed removes a spirit of gratitude. The truth is simple, when we are greedy it is impossible to be grateful. The man was blessed in amazing ways and had been given great material wealth. The good crop was given by God, but the man never gives thanks to God.

This is the only place in the Bible where retirement is spoken of, and here it is in the context of disapproval. Retiring to a life of self-indulgence finds no favor with God. This successful man had arrived without ever thinking where his life was heading. He was a parable of modern man.

B. Wisdom's Answer V-20

He was a fool because life is short. A sensible person will choose what is best for the long run. The man was a fool because he did not reckon with the fragility of life.

III. CLOSING REFLECTIONS (V-21)

There are also rich (*and poor too*) who are “*rich toward God*” because they use what God has given them for others.

What does it mean to be “*rich toward God*”? It means to acknowledge gratefully that everything we have comes from God, and then make an effort to use what He gives us for the good of others and the glory of God. Wealth can be *enjoyed* and *employed* at the same time if our purpose is to honor God.

The greatest tragedy is not what the man left behind but what lay *before* him: eternity without God! The man lived without God and died without God, and his wealth was but an incident in his life. How does a person become rich toward God? By declaring spiritual bankruptcy (*Rom. 3:10-20*) and turning to Christ (*2 Cor. 8:9*).