

Where is Your Treasure?

Luke 12.13-21

Jesus spoke often about money – the false lure of possessions sings its ‘siren song’ at one time or another in all our lives, and He warned that a wise disciple would be alert to its short-term promise, but long-term ruin. The parable of the rich fool graphically captures this truth.

The Rich Fool’s Foolishness

- *He mistook the source of his wealth*
- *He misused the wealth God had given him*
- *He based his security in his wealth*
- *He failed to invest for the coming kingdom*

Jesus Applies His Parable (Luke 12.22-34)

- *Avoid common interpretive error: “soul” and “life”*
- *Worry less, trust more (22-29)*
- *Pursue riches in the kingdom (30-32)*
- *Give on earth, receive treasure in heaven (33-34)*



1. Jesus’ telling the parable of the rich fool is prompted by a question from an anonymous person in the crowd (Lk. 12.13). Some quick-to-judge commentators say this man was preoccupied with money, but we need not jump to that conclusion. Anyone who has faced a conflict with family over inheritance can identify with this; it may be no more than a cry for justice. In Jesus’ response He doesn’t tell the man to “Forget it,” but says He is not one to decide such a case. He then begins His preface to the parable with “Beware…” How would you characterize Jesus’ overall attitude toward money?
2. Read the parable observantly, paying special attention to pronouns. How does the rich man view himself? How does Jesus’ portray the source of his wealth (v16)? What is the fallacy in the reasoning of the rich man? What do the words “financial security” mean to you? Is it wrong to invest and save for vacations or retirement? (Careful: Avoid extremes.) What do these biblical passages teach us? Mark 14.3-7; 2 Cor. 9.6-11; 1 Tim. 5.8; 6.6-10; James 4.13-17. Can you think of other biblical instruction on money?
3. Many English translations of verses 19-23 can be misleading, and lead to bad theology. The words “soul” (3x in vv.19-20) and “life” (2x in vv.22-23) are from the same Greek word, *psuchē* (ψυχή; we get our word “psyche” from it). We relate ‘soul’ with our ‘spiritual life,’ but the Greek word refers to our physical life on earth. Based on a wrong understanding, some have taught Jesus is saying that a rich person is going to hell. Read verses 22-34: What do we gain (or lose) based on our response to Jesus’ instruction?
4. A quip once said that Christians get their conviction ‘by proxy’ – that is, we see wrong in others, not ourselves. Meditate on Jesus’ words in Lk. 12.22-34, then ask yourself these questions: *Do I worry about financial matters? Am I constantly concerned about my financial future? Do I find myself envying those who are rich? If someone looked at my spending, would they say I am ‘seeking first His kingdom’? Where is my ‘treasure’? Where is my heart?*