

# Puzzling Parables

*The Rich Fool*

September 17, 2017

*Welcome to where we're learning to put our stuff in second place!*



Are you increasing in trust of God and love for others?

The first is anti-greediness. The second is anti-stinginess.

When a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples ... – Luke 12:1a NIV



He sent 72 followers in 36 pairs to every place in Galilee He was about to go. (Lk 10:1) Then, He pairs up the Twelve and prepares to send them into Judea (80 miles away), for at least two months, while He works in Galilee. **Nine months earlier he chose these young men to be His foot soldiers.**



**Now, they must go into battle unarmed, unfunded, and barefoot.**

We've been listening in on Jesus' rousing marching orders. Yet, one follower in the crowd is far more interested in what *he* wants to ask than what Jesus has to say.



I'll repeat the sentence we left off on. Put yourself back in the mood, and see if you can tell who isn't paying attention.

"When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say." 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?" – Luke 12:11-14 NIV

People *love* to use Jesus against their relatives! **This guy feels like something is unfair. He's not getting his share.** And, he's totally missing Jesus' point about ... *well ... everything!*

Jesus just said, "Don't worry about how you'll defend yourself or what you'll say, because, the Holy Spirit will teach you," and, this guy is like: "Hey, Jesus. *You* defend me. Tell my brother to divide up dad's possessions more evenly."

Then he said to them, "**Watch out!** [The enemy is sly] **Be on your guard against all kinds of greed;** [If he can't get you one way, he'll watch for another] **a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**" – Luke 12:15 NIV



Try telling that to my *greed* and *stinginess*; 'cause, they make *quite* a compelling argument!

Let's face it: **our closets and garages are filled with stuff we don't really need, that's bought with money we don't really have, to impress people we don't really like.**

Let's take the packrat Test: Hold up your fists, and lift a finger on *both hands* for every "yes".

1. **I own things I'll probably never use.**
2. **I sometimes find things I forgot I had.**
3. **I don't have one empty drawer or cupboard.**
4. **I have a hard time throwing things away.**
5. **I regularly lose things in my own house.**

Now, hold up your "yes" fingers to your nose and wiggle 'em!

Jesus tells the crowd a story to make His point.

Red Chairable video transcript [Maplewood Farm potato shed]:

Ever have a garden that produced so much, you couldn't give it all away?

Whether it's potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes, or zucchini, there's a deadline. You got'a give 'em away before they spoil! We all know that vegetables are not a long-term investment.

But what if we viewed our money and material possessions the same way?

**In the parable of The Rich Fool, Jesus teaches us to be openhanded and generous with what we've been given, before our own deadline arrives.**

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. 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 all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things 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 anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." – Luke 12:16-21 NIV



Jesus isn't coming against wealth, ambition, banks, retirement, or enjoying life. **This isn't about prosperity, but priority.**

We call it a piggy bank; but, **there's a big difference between saving and pigging.**

In the parable, when God says, “your life will be **demanded** from you,” Jesus uses a banking term for when a loan is called in for repayment.

**Our life is on loan; and God expects a return on His investment.**

**So, what are you tangibly increasing in ... mostly?**

**Trust in God and love for others; or, *stuff for your shelf?***



It's like having a home, a car, savings, and a retirement plan, and *then* winning a 10-minute shopping spree. It's *exciting* to race around gathering up more and more of what you already have more than enough of ... *for 10 minutes*.

But, what a horrible way to live this brief life.

Afterwards you survey your carts: one is filled with blenders, another with hams, and you have to decide what to do with it all. And as you pass through a low-income neighborhood, on your way home, a “light bulb” comes on: I'll use my *savings*, and some of my *retirement account* to build myself a big, heated *shed*! I'll get freezers for my hams and a big shelf for my blenders.



And, it's *prudent*, because it'll increase my property value!

But just as you put the *last* blender up on the shelf (a KitchenAid Pro-Line, 500 watt, 2-speed ... with a heavy-duty, die-cast base, and a 48 ounce, stainless steel container polished to a sleek and sexy mirror-like finish), it falls on your head and you die.

And, instead of the Lord saying, “Good job faithful servant.” He just shakes His head and says, “You idiot. You traded eternal treasures for blenders.” Jesus said:

**“This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.” – Luke 12:21 NV**

**So, what's it mean to be rich toward God?**

**It means using my blessings to bless God by blessing others.**

It's not about cleaning out closets; **it's first about finding our deepest security *in the Lord*, so there's *no need* to hoard.** Then, **it's about gathering, not to possess, but to bless.**



Collections become obsessions. And, Stuff accumulates and complicates. And, we can't help growing attached. So, **watch out for all kinds of greed; because, it robs you even as it rewards you.**

**Beware: the first day it calls you master; the second day it calls you friend; and, the third day it calls you slave.**



On average, the *lower* the household income the *higher* the percentage of charitable giving. Statistically, as our wealth increases, compassion, kindness, and charity decreases.

Paul Piff, a psychologist at Berkeley, has conducted social experiments that he explains on a TED talk called, “*Does money make you mean?*”



The more expensive the car, the less likely it'll stop for a pedestrian. And, the *higher* the tax bracket, the *less likely* to share \$10 worth of free junky trinkets with a stranger.



**It's scientifically documented: *Money makes us selfish jerks.***

However, only 46 seconds of watching a video on child poverty corrected all that and evened out the stats, proving that **we just need to get our eyes off of ourselves for literally one minute.**

Nine months earlier, on the hillside, Jesus had warned the Twelve:

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. – Matthew 6:24 NIV

Jesus personifies “Money” as a master, which is why the NIV capitalizes it.

**Jesus won't settle for a part-time soldier.** He doesn't say we can't serve God and *make money*; He just says **we can't serve God and make money ... our master.** How? Well, keep your blender on a bottom shelf and your money in the lower case.

While Paul was *in prison*, he wrote:

For to me, **to live is Christ** and **to die is gain.** – Philippians 1:20-21 NIV

Christ. First and foremost. Not *church*. Not *religion*. Not even *our mission*.

Fill in this blank: **For me, to really live is \_\_\_\_\_ ... what?**

Career? Clothes? Family? Food? Money? Sports? Popularity? Sex?

Now, choose one of *these*: **And to die is GAIN or LOSS.**

Because, *this* is the *crucial one!*

**If your first answer isn't Christ then you got'a circle loss.**

Because, we're basically on a 10-minute shopping spree. And, **you can either build trust and love ... or more shelves.** Which turns you into a *shelf'ish* jerk ... *scientifically speaking*.