

Ben Libby
 Sermon
 June 14th, Second Sunday after Pentecost

To Jesus Christ, who washed our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen! The Word of the LORD which forms a portion for our sermon text this morning comes from Luke's Gospel, chapter 12, verses 13 through 21:

Someone from the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." 14 But Jesus said to him, "Man, who appointed me to be a judge or an arbitrator over you?" 15 Then he said to them, "Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because a man's life is not measured by how many possessions he has." 16 He told them a parable: "The land of a certain rich man produced very well. 17 He was thinking to himself, 'What will I do, because I do not have anywhere to store my crops?' 18 He said, 'This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and goods. 19 And I will tell my soul, "Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry.'" 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your soul will be demanded from you. Now who will get what you have prepared?' 21 "That is how it will be for anyone who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Your Money's No Good Here

- I. The World tells us to be rich no matter what
- II. Jesus tells us to be rich toward God

This is the Word of The LORD!!! The congregation may be seated...

Mercy, Grace, and Peace ARE YOURS from your God and Father and from your Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed

Who wants to be a Millionaire? This is the name of a once-popular game show where contestants had the chance of winning 1 Million dollars by simply answering simple trivia questions. The whole premise of the game show name is obvious, isn't it? I mean, who wouldn't want to be a millionaire? If you said, "I don't want to be a millionaire", you would have to be crazy right?

Well, no. This would however seem to be crazy to anyone who lived in our society today. It is a society that promotes the idea of becoming rich. We tend to subscribe to the idea that greed is good. We don't view people the same based on what they have, both good and bad. If someone is extremely wealthy, they are either admired or envied. But they are viewed differently. We also don't consider greed in the same

way we view other sins. If someone murdered someone, everyone would deplore that crime. But if someone amassed a large amount of wealth in a less than right way, they would be lauded to a degree.

Who wouldn't want to be a millionaire? But why is that so obviously true? Why do we, as a society, want to be rich? What does great wealth really mean? At the end of the day, great amounts of wealth equal great amounts of options. If you had great wealth, you could choose what you spent your time on, you could choose to buy a great number of things, you could choose what you want to do instead of doing what you need to do. Being wealthy means you call your own shots.

But, there is always a price to be paid, no matter what. Jesus said, **"For what profit is it to a man if**

he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

(Mat 16:26 NKJ) People think that if they have money then they can do whatever they want. Not true! The Ten Commandments apply to both rich and poor alike. We all are sinful, and because of that sin, we will all end up in the same state. DEAD! The goal shouldn't be to accumulate as much money as possible. The goal should be what Jesus points out in our text this morning. We shouldn't desire riches above all as the world does, instead, we should want to be rich toward God! LORD, SANCTIFY US BY YOUR TRUTH, YOUR WORD IS TRUTH, AMEN!!!

Someone from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

Our whole text is introduced by this one person coming up to Jesus and expecting Him to solve this matter of money for him. It has been said that family and business do not mix. This is largely true because you have a responsibility to both and when you mix the two together, feelings can get hurt and responsibilities can get neglected. But in Israel, this was always the case. Inheritance was a big factor, and the oldest male member of the family usually got the lion's share of the father's property once he died. This was designed to be a way to keep the families property in the family.

But still, isn't this question coming out of left field for Jesus? Well yes and no. It wasn't uncommon for a rabbi to mediate a family dispute based on his knowledge of the Torah. But this was no ordinary Rabbi. Just by the wording of this inquiry, it seemed like this man wasn't focusing on the right thing. After all, before him stood the Lamb of God who was about to take away the sin of the world. And this man wants to bend the ear of the Divine Son of God over a squabble about family inheritance?

But still, this individual does bring up a good topic, one that Jesus would talk about a lot in the Gospels. Jesus' conclusion to the question brings about the principle on which the rest of the text is focused on: **“Watch out and be on guard against all greed,**

because a man's life is not measured by how many possessions he has.”

Have you ever been told by somebody, “Your money's no good here”? I can see only two different scenarios in which this would indeed be the case. On the positive side, it would be that the person in which you are trying to pay has so much respect or love for you that they would simply refuse to accept payment for the services they had just provided. In this case, it would be “on the house” so to speak. The other case would be on the negative side. Someone might tell you “Your money's no good HERE”, that is, the money that you are trying to use will not work HERE. Anyone who has traveled internationally will tell you that this indeed may be the case. Our American dollar has spending power, but that is mostly the case in America. Try traveling to a foreign country and spending a \$20 bill. It will not work in most cases. You probably first need to get your money changed into the local currency first, usually for a fee.

This is also a principle spiritually. We like to think that those who are wealthy have all the answers. They must have done something right to acquire all that wealth. But the fact of the matter is that great possessions or great wealth really mean very little when it comes to the kingdom of God. The world that we live in tells us that if we acquire wealth then we can do what we want. But no amount of money will get a man into heaven.

Jesus brings up the following parable to illustrate that point. This is one of many such parables. Think of the rich man and his poor neighbor Lazarus. The rich man had a lavish life. The poor man lived in depravity and agony. But, when it was all over, Lazarus went to heaven and the rich man was in the agony of hell. It was there where the rich man would have given everything he ever had for just a drop of water to cool his tongue. But his money was no good there!

But what was wrong with the man of this parable? **“The land of a certain rich man produced very well. 17 He was thinking to himself, ‘What will I do, because I do not have anywhere to store my crops?’ 18 He said, ‘This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I**

will store all my grain and goods. 19 And I will tell my soul, "Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry."

What is the flaw in this plan? It's not that bad of a plan in and of itself. He took what he had been given and planned on making more with it. There isn't anything wrong with that. Indeed, God wants us to use our talents and possessions which He Himself has personally given us, and use them!

The problem is in the man's attitude. He doesn't see the things that he has been given as what they are; a gift. He sees the increase in growth as happenstance, and he determines that he will capitalize on it and leverage it into an easy life. Again, it's not wrong to have wealth or even a retirement plan (which this person takes this to be). What is wrong is that he imagines that this great plan of his will be the answer to all of life's problems. It is a plan based on greed.

And that is the temptation that comes from greed. We imagine that wealth equals peace of mind. It quite often provides the opposite. **Ecclesiastes 5:10 EHV Anyone who loves money is never satisfied with money, and anyone who loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.** The love of money has a way of becoming a crutch. All you can think about is getting more. If money is viewed as the answer to all your problems than you really can never have enough. Our problems extend much further than just the things of this world, and at the end of the day, you just can't take it with you. How then could you buy your way into heaven?

Again, it has to be reiterated, money is not intrinsically bad. There is nothing evil in and of itself about money. It is simply pieces of paper or materials that are of some commonly viewed value. Perhaps one of the most misquoted Bible verses out there comes from our Epistle reading this morning. People will quote you 1 Timothy 6:10 as "money is the root of all evil". That is not what Paul/the Holy Spirit is saying there. He is saying "the **love** of money is a root of **all kinds of evil**" and there is a big difference.

And we see it here. It wasn't wrong that the man in the parable had riches or land that produced better

than expected. That was all given to him by God. The problem was his attitude to these possessions he had been given. He wanted more. Why? So he could solve all his problems and live an easy life! He says so to himself: **"Soul, you have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry."**

The simple fact of the matter is that on earth, money is not evil. Money also is not good. It is our attitude towards that money that we have or don't have that makes US good or evil. You could be rich or poor and have a godly attitude towards money. You could be rich or poor and have a poor attitude towards money. You could be resentful that you don't have more or you could be reliant on it instead of who gave it to you. Your money's no good here, it is how you treat it and what you do with it!

Your money's no good here because here is not where we are headed. Have you ever had any foreign money left over from a trip? What would you do with that money? I suppose if you had a sizeable amount left over, you could get it changed back into our currency. But say you just had a little bit left? It wouldn't really be worth the trouble. You would probably just hang on it. It would simply collect dust. I have a few coins from the last time I went to Canada. I guess that could come in handy someday, but for the most part, it just sits on my desk as paperweights.

This is also true about our money here. They say "you can't take it with you"! This is often an excuse for excessive spending, but the principle is indeed sound. You really can't take it with you. When Job suffered the greatest tragedy of his life, what was his conclusion? **"Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."** (Job 1:21 NKJ)

We bring nothing into this world, and we take nothing out of it. Everyone knows this, but there is also more to it than that spiritually.

Do we truly bring nothing into the world? NO! We know from God's Word that we do bring something into this world, and it's not good! We know that

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. (Psa 51:5 NKJ) As we enter this world, we enter in a state of deadness. We bring in sin. But how do we leave? That is the question...

Jesus came to this earth to pay for our sins. When He went to the cross, He took our sins with Him. We brought in our sinful baggage when we entered this world. When Jesus entered this world, He came to pay for that. When Jesus died, He died so that we would not die in those very same sins. Now, we have the opportunity to take something out of this world. We can take the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and leave this world as redeemed Children of God, destined to inherit eternal life!

20 "But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your soul will be demanded from you. Now who will get what you have prepared?' 21 "That is how it will be for anyone who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

The conclusion of Christ's parable is the negative side of the coin. If we don't have reliance on God, and instead rely on money (or anything else for that matter) this will be the same conclusion that we are faced with. That is why we don't want to simply be rich. If we are rich in the term of this world, great. But the point is that we should never rely on anyone or anything more than our God.

This then begs the question, "How can we be rich toward God?" How is that possible?

To be rich toward God is, at the end of the day to simply believe in what God tells us. Being rich toward God is to believe that God is the giver of all things, including life and salvation. To show that one believes is to share with others the gifts God gives. This is the lesson Jesus taught in his various words about possessions. Behind it is the Gospel of grace: forgiveness is bestowed as God's free gift in Jesus Christ!

The haunting question asked by God to the man is a terror to the one who is only rich in terms of the world. But the same question is pure comfort to the one who is rich toward God! **Now who will get what you have prepared?**

I am sure that whoever would have inherited the possessions of that landowner in the parable would have gotten quite a bit. But that wouldn't do any good for the soul of the man who was already dead. But, if you have the inheritance of God, that is something that we can indeed take with us!

Jesus said in John 14, **"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (Joh 14:2-3 NKJ)**

God's question to the man is terrifying, but not to us who have had mansions in heaven prepared for us! We will get what He has prepared for us! Namely, eternal life!

Who wants to be a Millionaire? We would be fooling ourselves if we said that we wouldn't. But, at the same time, we already are! We may not be worth millions here on this earth, but we have something far better for us planned for our estate in heaven. **Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

Dear Christians, our treasure is in heaven. How then are we to go about this life until we receive that everlasting reward? How do we use what God gives us? Responsibly, and always focused on the fact that our real treasure is not to be found on this earth. Our treasure is in heaven. We will get there not due to how much wealth we scrape together here in this world. No, we will get to our mansion in heaven due to the fact that Jesus paid the ultimate price to save our souls. We get to heaven alone through the riches of Christ's gift to us. You can't take most things with you when you go, but you can take that grace with you, and that grace will get you where you need to go, to eternal paradise with Him. AMEN!!!

