

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, July 31-August 6 (C) - Luke 12:13-21

Stories of Discipleship: *A Rich Fool's Story*

Focus Question: *How do you guard against greed?*

word of life

“And [Jesus] 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.’” Luke 12:15 (NRSV)

Read Luke 12: 13-21

A crowd including his disciples gathers around Jesus to hear him teach. He uses clear statements and parables to warn and prepare his followers for when he would no longer be with them. (See Luke 12:1-12) Jesus is facing his own death in Jerusalem and the intensity of his words reflects his limited time with them.

His teaching is interrupted by someone from the crowd who asks a specific question about his family’s inheritance. It appears this man has conflicts with his own brother and wants Jesus to intervene. The man is bold enough to tell Jesus precisely how he wants Jesus to settle the dispute, but Jesus does not want any part of it. He does not get baited into the disagreement.

1. *What do you think the dispute is really about?*
2. *Why won't Jesus get involved?*

Jesus understands the real issue is greed and issues a timeless warning against its power. This man’s dilemma over inheritance is only one illustration among many kinds of greed.

3. *What are some other kinds of greed?*
4. *How is this a timely warning for today?*

Jesus tells a parable about a rich man who had an abundance of crops. He leveled his barns to build bigger and bigger ones. His wealth was quite a comfort to him as he made plans to relax and enjoy the fruit of his labor. But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you.” (Luke 12:20 NRSV)

5. *Does it seem fair to you for the man to die?*
6. *Why did God call him a fool?*
7. *Are all rich people fools? Why or why not?*

Apparently, the man in the parable lived only for himself and without regard for others who might be in need. He had plenty, but rather than share with anyone, he hoarded his wealth. He had more crops than he could ever hope to use.

8. *How is possible to be poor on this earth, but rich with God?*
9. *How is possible to be rich on this earth, but poor with God?*

The theme of the reversal of the rich and poor is interwoven throughout Luke’s gospel, beginning with the Magnificat sung by Mary (Luke 1:46-56) “He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.” (Luke 1:52-53 NRSV) A person’s wealth does not reflect that person’s relationship with God. Jesus’ warning extends to this and every time and place.

10. *What is the message of this passage for today?*

word *among us*

Sherry was only four years old, but she begged her parents to buy her the pink tennis shoes advertised on television. She had never seen anything so pretty in her life. Plus, she knew she the shoes would help her run fast. On her birthday, she received many presents, but no pink tennis shoes. She couldn't hide her disappointment, and tears came to her eyes.

But then her grandpa leaned back on his chair and pulled one package from behind the couch. It was wrapped in pink paper with pink ribbons and a pink bow. Her eyes began to sparkle as she ripped open the box with those pink shoes. Her feet danced around the room. She knew her life was perfect now and forever.

1. *Will pink shoes make her life perfect? If so, for how long?*
2. *Tell a story of coveting an item, convinced it might complete your life.*
3. *When did you learn possessions will not complete your life?*

We are bombarded by the media and marketing wizards who try to convince us of all the items we need to complete our life. Possessions once considered a luxury are now regarded as necessities. Our desks, rooms, and lives are cluttered with non-essentials. In reality, we actually *need* very little to survive in this life. Yet, we accumulate much in our lifetimes, but for what purpose? Some of us purchase far more than we can afford, hiking up our credit card debts. It is a vicious cycle whether we covet pink shoes, pink cars, or pink houses.

4. *What is the hot item which the advertisers are trying to lure you to buy?*
5. *How do you resist keeping up with the latest fad?*

Jesus warned his disciples about greed by telling the parable of the rich fool. This man was not foolish because he was rich but because he had lost his perspective and confused his priorities. His possessions had become primary in his life – even to point of becoming his god.

6. *How do you keep from being possessed by your possessions?*
7. *List different kinds of greed.*
8. *As people mature, do we get less greedy? Explain.*

Jesus concludes with these words, “So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:21 NRSV) Take a moment to ponder what it means to be “rich toward God”. We often think of God extending riches and blessings toward us. Hopefully, we respond with a life of gratitude. But, this phrase suggests a particular quality in our relationship towards God. It includes entrusting one's wealth to God and God's care.

9. *How would you describe the richness of your relationship towards God?*
10. *How does one lay up treasures in heaven without adopting a works righteousness attitude?*
11. *If someone feels they have a poor relationship with God, what would you suggest?*

Prayer

Mighty One, you are so generous in your gifts to us. Help us to freely share our bounty with others. Create in us generous and loving hearts. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Luke 12:22-31

last word

This week lessen your possessions
by giving to someone in need.



Daily Discipleship

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