JESUS, ONE ON ONE

RICH IN CHRIST 3/12/2023
LUKE 12:13-21

MAIN POINT

NOTE: This may be out of order. By the time of publish, we have yet to determine the order. Please see Luke 10 lesson if this is not correct. Today's message will be on Jesus' personal interaction with people (From the gospel of Luke).

One person at a time, One conversation at a time, One act of kindness at a time. Jesus taught us the importance of focusing on the person in front of us. Throughout the gospel of Luke we see a record of Jesus personal interactions with a variety of people. He demonstrated that impacting others begins by focusing on the person in front of you. Following His example, we learn to focus on one person at a time, engaging in one conversation at a time, demonstrating one act of kindness at a time.

The lesson will focus on: Following Christ means focusing on what we have rather than what we lack.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

> **Have you ever experienced buyer's remorse? When did you feel it? Why do you think you did?**
>
> **If so many of us feel a sense of buyer's remorse, why do you think our culture still longs for more? What does our desire for more reveal about the condition of our hearts?**

We live in a culture of consumption. We want more of everything, more French fries, more cars, more space, more, more, more. This greed in our hearts shows us that we are looking to things to provide us with the security, comfort, and joy that can really only be found in God. As we confront our greed, we see that when we focus on what we do have rather than what we do not have, we become more and more aware that we are already rich in Christ.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 12:13-21.
>
> **What similarities do you see between the man in this story and the consumer culture we live in?**

Why do you think Jesus said that we must be on guard against greed?

Was the rich man's saving motivated by faith? If not, what motivated him?

It's not wrong to accumulate wealth or have a desire to make more money. What is wrong, though, is wanting more money only for our own comfort, security, and happiness. The man in Jesus' story wanted a comfortable and easy life full of luxury. This runs contrary to Jesusteaching on self-sacrificial service (see Mark 10:45) and care for the poor (see Matt. 5:3; 25:37-40).

Look at verses 17-19. How many first-person pronouns does the man use in these verses? What does that reveal about his perspective and priorities?

Is it possible to pray in such a way that you are really just talking to yourself? Why might praying that way be detrimental to our spiritual health?

What does the rich man say to his own soul? What does that tell us about the condition of his heart?

Why were the rich man's actions in the story so foolish? Does that mean we should never save for the future? Why or why not?

The rich man's actions were foolish because he was only thinking of himself and wasn't considering how to use his wealth for kingdom purposes. The Bible commends saving for the future as long as we do so with a desire to honor the Lord and bless our neighbors. This text challenges us to consider whether our resources (money, possessions, and time) are dedicated to advancing Christ's kingdom.

Why are we often poor judges of our own hearts? How might seeking out brothers or sisters who will be honest with us help us take steps toward honoring God with our resources?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19.

How might the way we use our money have eternal implications?

How should we use our money if we hope to "lay up treasure . . . for the coming age" (vv. 18-19)?

The way we use our money does not earn us salvation, we are saved by grace through faith and not by works (Eph. 2:8-10). There are, however, ways we can use the money God gives us to make an eternal impact on the world around us. A kingdom mentality with regard to our possessions requires seeing all that we have as gift from God given to us to help us find joy in Him, advance His Kingdom, and serve our neighbors.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is one way you can remind yourself this week of what God has given to you?

What specific changes do you need to make in your lifestyle in order to battle greed by becoming more generous with your time, money, and other resources?

If grace is giving up what you have for the sake of someone else, how might we show grace to others in the way we use our money? Our possessions?

How might we, as a group, join together in using the resources God has given us for kingdom purposes?

PRAYER

Pray in thanks today for God's generosity to you. Thank Him for His great gift of Jesus Christ. Ask Him to help you to fight against greed in your life and show you practical ways that you might generously give what God has given you for the advance of His kingdom.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 12:13-21

12:13-14. An anonymous member of the crowd interrupted Jesus. He set Jesus up as a human judge deciding inheritance rights. Jesus denied that He had any right to act in such a position. That belongs to the nation's court system.

12:15. Not making a legal judgment, Jesus did make a moral one. Your request shows how greedy you are, He told the man. Lay aside your greed. Think about life. What is most important to you? Money or relationship with God? Surely, your life is more important than what you own.

12:16-19. Jesus illustrated His teaching with a parable. A farmer overcame all agricultural odds and achieved great success. But this brought a new problem. What do you do with your riches? How do you store it until you can sell it or use it? How can you keep it from rotting and ruining? The answer is obvious. Build bigger barns. This is a great short-term solution, but can you afford the capital investment in relationship to what you normally expect? "I can," the farmer declared, "For this crop is so good it will support me for years to come. I don't have to worry about money and work anymore."

12:20-21. God has another perspective: you must die tonight. Then what happens to all your wealth? This is not an exceptional case. It applies to anyone who trusts in riches. Riches have one major weakness. They have no purchasing power after death. They cannot buy the currency needed to get to heaven. Do not try to be rich in regard to the

bank or barn. Be rich in relationship to God. Through prayer, study, obedience, and practice of the Word, be sure you are part of the kingdom of God.

1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

6:17. Christianity does not require a vow of poverty or the forsaking of wealth, for Paul wrote, “command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant.” Some followers of Christ will be wealthy by society’s standards. Just as Paul told slaves to stay and serve their masters (1 Tim. 6:1â€“2), he also left the rich person in his surroundings. Circumstance makes little difference in the value system of God. It is how a person behaves in their circumstances that makes the difference, either glorifying or discrediting the name of Christ. However, there are inherent dangers in having wealth.

Another danger which confronts the wealthy is that they easily place confidence in what they see; their stuff. Paul told them not to “put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain.” Jesus cautioned us about the uncertainty of money (Matt. 6:19). Each day we see the evidences of his warning, bankruptcy cases increase, the stock market fluctuates, governments fall and their monetary systems fail, prices escalate, and money drains away. There is no predictability when it comes to money; trusting it is risky.

Instead, wealthy believers are to hold their money with an open hand; they are to “put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” Putting hope in money is no different from the primitive man or woman who bows to an idol of wood or stone, expecting it to protect or provide. This is worshiping the creation instead of the Creator (Rom. 1:25). The Christian must never invest trust in things but in relationship particularly with God, maker of all that exists (John 1:3).

6:18. Paul almost always countered the negative with the positive. If we are to refrain from something, then he tells us to engage in something else. If the rich are not to devote themselves to things, then they are to invest themselves in doing good, to be rich in “good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.”

How we invest ourselves and our time is more valuable than money. God desires that we spend ourselves in doing good, helping others, benefiting those around us. It is a tendency of the wealthy to think that others exist or their benefit, to do their bidding. In God’s eyes it is just the opposite. Those who have been richly blessed must give abundantly. Once again, God desires that we imitate him. Just as he richly provides us everything for our enjoyment, just as his mercy and love are without limit, so his people are to live with the same extravagance.

6:19. By imitating the generous nature of our Lord, “they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age.” The treasure which accumulates in the life to come is not money, stock portfolios, or real estate. The treasure of which Paul spoke is spiritual, and it lasts for eternity.

This eternal wealth, the generous and giving life expressed in the world, is evidence of true faith in God. In this way it is a firm foundation for entry into eternity. How we use

our time and our resources indicates where our heart truly belongs. If it is directed by the values and compassion of God, “we take hold of the life that is truly life.”