

Jesus Warns Against Greed Luke 12:13-21

by David Servant

Jesus warns against the sin of greed, a selfish attitude toward material things that can lead to a lack of preparation for eternity.

Description

David Servant preaches about the dangers of greed and the importance of having a rich relationship with God. He discusses the story of the man who asked Jesus to divide his father's estate, highlighting Jesus' refusal to make a judgment without knowing all the facts and warning against the sin of greed. Jesus uses the illustration of a rich man who prioritized material possessions over a relationship with God, ultimately facing eternal consequences for his selfish decisions.

Transcript

no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be' (Luke 12:33-34)." - "He was rich in material things, but did not have, as Jesus said, a 'rich relationship with God' (Luke 12:21)." - "The most important thing in life is to have a rich relationship with God." applicationPoints: - "Guard against greed by giving away a portion of what God gives you regularly." - "Prioritize a relationship with God over material things." - "Recognize that material possessions are not the most important thing in life." keywords: - "Greed" - "Selfishness" - "Materialism" - "Relationship with God" - "Priorities" - "Giving" - "Stewardship" - "Eternity" ---

When an unmarried person dies, all his possessions usually become the property of other people, based on the instructions in the deceased person's will. If the deceased person has children, his possessions are usually divided equally among them. When possessions are not divided among the children equally, problems occur, because if one child gets less than another, he feels cheated. This must have been what happened to the man who asked Jesus to tell his brother to divide their father's estate.

Although God knows everything, and Jesus is God, Jesus voluntarily stripped Himself of that ability to know everything when He became a man. Therefore, because He didn't know all the facts, He wasn't able to make an instant judgment in the matter, as God the Father could have. We don't know, and neither did Jesus, if the man had really been cheated by his brother. It seems unlikely that he had received absolutely nothing while his brother had received everything. More likely, he'd received close to half of what his father owned, but felt his brother got the "bigger" half. The situation required a judge who would carefully examine the facts, appraise the value of the estate, and then determine if it had been divided fairly. Jesus, being perfectly fair, refused to make a judgment without knowing all those important facts.

However, Jesus did detect that the man was in danger of allowing himself to be gripped by greed. This man was so dominated by the desire for his fair share that he interrupted Jesus' sermon to make his request, foolishly hoping that Jesus would make a judgment so he could hastily possess what he thought belonged to him. Jesus seized the opportunity to warn us all against the sin of greed, a sin that manifests itself in many ways in people's lives.

Using an illustration of a rich man who became richer, Jesus explained that greed is basically a selfish attitude toward material things. The rich man's land was very productive, and his barns couldn't store all his crops. Rather than realizing that his abundance came from God, obligating him to share it, he built bigger barns to store it all so he could retire early and live a life of ease. He didn't think of those who had no food, and said nothing about giving a tithe to the Lord. He was rich in material things, but did not have, as Jesus said, a "rich relationship with God" (Luke 12:21). Otherwise, he would have acted differently.

Jesus said the man was a fool. The reason is clear: Although he was prepared for retirement, he was unprepared for eternity. He died the very same day that he made his selfish decision, making that decision his final decision.

No one knows the day he or she will die, but one thing is certain: everyone will die one day. And everyone will have to stand before God to give an account of his life. Our actions on earth will be what God uses to determine our eternal destiny, because our actions reveal what is really in our hearts. The most important thing in life is to have a rich relationship with God. If we do, we'll let God direct us in what we do with the material things He gives us. A little later, in this same sermon, Jesus instructed His followers, "Sell what you have and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven have no holes in them. Your treasure will be safe---no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be" (Luke 12:33-34).

Q. Was Jesus telling us that it is wrong for us to own any material things?

A. No, He Himself promised in this same sermon to provide for our material needs (see Luke 12:31). He wouldn't give us something that was sinful for us to have. He was warning us against a selfish attitude toward what we own, and of placing a higher priority on material things than our relationship with God. The best way to guard against greed is to give away a portion of what God gives you regularly.

Q. What do you think Jesus would say about the kid who brings his parents a toy catalog and tells them, "I want everything on pages twelve through forty-one!"

A. He would probably say that material things were much too high of a priority for that child.

Q. What do you think Jesus would say to a child who told his mother, "Please take part of what you'd spend on me for Christmas presents this year and give it to a native missionary"?

A. He would probably say that He is pleased with that child's unselfishness.

Application: Are you guarding against greed from gripping you? How are you doing it?

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