

Parable of the Inheritance

by Ken Baird

The parable of the inheritance teaches us the importance of being content with what we have, not being covetous, and rejoicing in the Lord to avoid the curse of materialism.

Duration: 34:47

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:5-6, 1 Timothy 6:8-9, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Materialism", "Spiritual Priorities"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the parable of the rich man who had a crop surplus. The man decides to tear down his barns and build bigger ones to store all his fruits and goods. He plans to live a life of ease, indulging in food and drink. However, God intervenes and tells him that his life will be required of him that very night. The preacher highlights four common mistakes made by this man: selfishness, materialism, lack of gratitude, and a focus on worldly pleasures. The sermon also references Psalm 73, where the psalmist struggles with the prosperity of the wicked. The preacher emphasizes the importance of rejoicing in the Lord and not being envious of the worldly possessions of others.

Transcript

I've spoken on this lesson so many times. I know that I've spoken on it here. But I didn't feel like taking up anything else, because it breaks your continuity.

And these parables are very, very important in Luke and in the parables that the Lord used. They're repeated from one of the Gospels to the next, the so-called Synoptic Gospels. And when you think of all that the Lord could have written about, caused to have been written in his Bible, in his Word, you might think that he would want a greater variety.

But this one, in Luke, is common to Luke alone. So let's don't mess the story. Let's don't dodge it.

This is a very modern portion of scripture. It's modern as a dispute about an inheritance. Did you ever hear anything like that before? A dispute about an inheritance? Well, they had it in those days.

This man had a crop surplus. Have you ever heard of a crop surplus before? This man took some means of coping with his problem. And it was a problem.

Have you ever heard anything like that before? This man died. I think that's current, too, isn't it? This man died. Well, let's think about him.

The Lord is talking in this twelfth chapter of Luke about very, very important things. He's talking about eternity. He's talking about the seriousness of going into eternity without Christ.

And this man, out of the blue, so to speak, has a question. He's going to use the Lord. He's not so much interested in what the Lord is saying, but he's going to use the Lord.

And he breaks right into the conversation, interrupts the train of thought that the Lord is speaking about. And he says, And the Lord immediately said, Now, I think what makes this parable so current with us is because of the current materialism of our age. It's hard to escape it.

We used to get by on so much less than we do now. And it would seem that the things that we considered in those days as luxuries are now necessities. And we somehow attach undue significance to these things.

Now, we're all susceptible. Myself included. Even I am not perfect.

Excuse my humor. But I really realize the rebuke of this portion of the Scripture. But this man, in a particular sense, is really overcome by it.

He is materialistic, as we say, to the core. We can be materialistic slightly. Let's hope that's only slightly.

But this man was materialistic to the core. And so the Lord, the man in the parable. And I'm not so sure that the one who answered the question wasn't materialistic to the core.

Because he did not want to give his brother any of the inheritance that he thought was his own. He was out for number one. That seems to have a familiar sound to it.

In this world in which we live, you've heard of labor strikes, haven't you? You've heard of mediation boards when they can't settle their strikes. That's the way we're set up in this world. Materialism.

We've got to be on guard against it. I need to preach against it so much because I'm preaching against myself. But let's think about the important, the things that are really, really important in our lives.

We should become occupied with a God that gives us all our blessings instead of our blessings. We should be occupied with a blessed door instead of the blessings. And God wants us to be that way.

He wants us to be content. Content with what he's given us. Now I'm not promoting laziness.

I don't mean that. I'm not promoting anything of carelessness about our earthly goods. I'm not promoting that.

Let me say at the very beginning of this little family Bible hour that we're enjoying together. Let me say at the very beginning of it. There's nothing wrong with money.

Believe me. The Bible doesn't say that there's anything wrong with money. It's the love of money that is the root of every evil.

Money can be a blessing. It can be used for God. Material blessings can be used for God.

And they can be used for our own comfort and for our own health. But when we have that itch for more, and that has been, the covetousness has been defined, was defined by a child as the itch for more. I like it.

The itch for more. You know what it is to itch, don't you? Oh, it's fun and then it isn't fun. It's fun as long as you're doing it, but you can't stop.

And it's that way with covetousness to a great degree. And we have to watch. We have to be on guard.

And so this man, the Lord takes occasion by this man's dispute with his brother about the inheritance. And he says, I want you to be on guard. And he says it in very plain language.

He says, take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. His life isn't just, it isn't constituted that way.

You know, I like the 73rd Psalm. Asaph, it was the Psalm of Asaph. Asaph was having a very, very real, what shall I say, not a complex, he had a problem.

Asaph had a problem in the 73rd Psalm. When he looked on the prosperity of the wicked, and he looked on his own poverty, his own, shall we say, tribulations, troubles, he began to be a little irritated by it in the 73rd Psalm. And he couldn't talk about it.

He said, I don't want to mention it lest I stumble anybody. But I can't understand why the unredeemed have it so easy, why they have so many riches. And here I am in trouble, in trial, and he had to say, I don't, I can't talk about it.

I tell you, I think that that is so important and so in line with this 12th chapter of Luke. I'm going to turn to the 73rd Psalm, and I'd welcome you to turn to it with me if you will. Psalm 73.

He says, Truly God is good to Israel. So we have to say that. Even the suchest are of a clean heart.

But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped, for I was envious of the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. There are no bands in their depth, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.

Therefore pride comforts them above the chain. That is the curse of materialism. The scorn of violence covers them as a garment.

Therefore pride comforts them above the chain. Violence covers them as a garment. The violence hasn't appeared on the scene yet.

It doesn't appear until later in the psalm. Their eyes stand out with fatness. They have more than heart could wish.

They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression. They speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

Therefore his people return hither, and the waters of a full cup are wrung out to them, and they say, How doth God know? And is their knowledge in the Most High? That is the curse of their materialism. It made them so self-sufficient that they didn't need God. And Asaph looks at these people, and he envies them now.

You know, it's amazing. I'm glad that he's honest enough to admit that, don't you? I'm glad that he was honest enough to admit that he was into it. And then he goes down here, and he says in verse 13, Verily I

have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

For all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning. And if I say I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. He says, I can't even talk about it.

I don't want to stumble anybody. And he was really, he had an inner conflict. Let's see how I dealt with it.

When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then I understood their end.

Their end is sudden. As we read, Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, and cast them down into destruction. How were they brought into desolation? As in a moment they were utterly consumed with terror.

As a dream when one awakeneth. So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their ends. Thus was my heart grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

Now remorse sets in. He went into the sanctuary. God made it plain to him, Asa, their end is coming.

It will come suddenly and quickly. And it will sweep them away into eternity. Then Asa, because he doubted the Lord, and haven't you had that experience perhaps of doubting the Lord? And he proved to you that he was utterly responsible.

And that he was absolutely faithful. And then you've had to reproach yourself for it. Asa did.

He says, Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee.

Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? There is none that I may desire beside thee.

My flesh and my heart faileth. But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. Now he's down to basics.

He says, My riches is in the God that I am. He was satisfied with him. I have Christ.

What warmth I want. Now, if Asa, that godly man, and Asa was a wonderful musician, and wrote some of the most choice songs, if he had this inner conflict, what about us? Now I think this is probably true of young people particularly, because of the standard that is set in the world today. We want to start out where mom and dad left off, and they can't do that very well.

And it hurts. Let's say then, in this talk about poverty, and I don't want you to think this is a psychological lecture. It's not.

But let's talk about what poverty really is. Poverty is really self-need. Self-need.

That's the way I would define poverty. If a person feels that he has a great need, then that person is poor. If his needs are met, and he has no need, he's rich.

Now, Paul tells us this in his epistle to Timothy. We might turn to it, 1 Timothy chapter 6. 1 Timothy chapter 6. And he says there, verse 5, "...perverse disputings of men," I'm breaking into the sentence, you notice,

"...of corrupt minds and destitute of truth, supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into the world, this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing else. And having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. But they that will be rich fall into temptations and a snare, and into many foolish and virtual lusts, which drown them in perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil, every evil I think the margin has, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, leave these things, and follow after racism, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." Now, evidently, Timothy was a young man, and Paul is writing to him. And I think that he thinks that Timothy may need this.

And I think that perhaps he's right. But he writes to Timothy, and, of course, the Spirit of God preserves this letter for us to speak to our hearts as well as to Timothy. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

Now, let's go back to our original definition of poverty. Poverty is relative. It's felt need.

Now, if I'm satisfied with my little house, and if I'm satisfied with my car, though it's a few years old, and it gives me a reasonable expectancy of getting me to my destination, I'm just satisfied, and I'm happy with my circumstances, I'm rich. I'm really rich. Now, if I'm not, I'm poor.

Now, I want to press this point. It is relative. Now, I remember distinctly, this happened years and years ago, but I heard of a man who committed suicide because his personal fortune had shrunk to twenty millions of dollars.

He couldn't face his friends. He was tremendously wealthy, and when he got down to twenty millions, he committed suicide. He just couldn't take it.

It's relative, isn't it? If we can be happy with what we've got, we're rich. Rich! You can only eat so much. You can only eat so much ham and eggs.

You can only sleep so hard. You can only keep so warm. Well, God says, don't be covetous.

Hebrews tells us that. He doesn't close that wonderful book before it tells us this very thing. And he's speaking to Jewish people, incidentally, but let's don't doubt it.

Hebrews chapter 13, verse 5, let your conversation be without covetousness. Don't let it come into your life. And be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, so that we may see, boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do underneath.

Be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. We've got the Lord. He is ours.

We're rich. Absolutely rich. Now, I don't want to labor the point.

Let's get to the man, this man that the Lord talks about in the parable. This man makes some common mistakes. I think we, I know I spoke on this here about two years ago.

I made the emphasis on, I will say this in my own defense, I made the emphasis on Luke 12 and 21. I hope your memory isn't that good. I want to count on the fact that you've forgotten all that I've said so I can say it again.

But we emphasize the 21st verse. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. And if you remember, I spoke about being rich in love, rich in faith, rich in generosity, rich in good works.

Those things in which we can be rich. But let's talk about this poor man. He speaks his parable in verse 16.

The ground of a certain rich man dropped forth plentifully. He had a crop surplus. And he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits.

And he said, this will I do. I will pull down my barns and build greater, build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods and I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease.

Eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? Now this man made four common mistakes.

Four mistakes that are common to men. Mistake number one, he left God out of his plan. He says to himself, now I don't know whether he talked out loud or not, but I doubt if he said this if anybody was around.

I never like to talk out loud when people are around, that is, except I'm talking to them. I'm embarrassed when people find me talking to myself. But I do, I talk to myself because I like to listen to interesting speakers.

And then I always like to talk to an intelligent audience. But this man was talking to himself. And I suppose he thought no one heard.

But how could the Lord tell this parable if he didn't know what he was talking about? The Lord knew his thoughts. The Lord knew his thoughts. Now he's talking to himself, mind you.

But this is what he's saying. What shall I do? What shall I do? Was it his entire responsibility? God gave him the crop. But he says, what shall I do? Now there's no thought of asking the Lord about this at all.

He's an I specialist. Do you notice the I's here? All through this portion. What shall I do? Because I have no room where to bestow my fruits.

And he said, this will I do. Now he doesn't say, if the Lord will. James reminds us to always say, if the Lord will.

And I try to cultivate that. Really I do. If the Lord will.

But he doesn't say that. This will I do. So he says.

I'll pull down my barns. I will pull them down, of course. And build greater and there will I bestow all my fruits, my goods.

I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years, and so on. He's an I specialist. He specializes in the I. But God is not in all his plans.

That's not Christian experience. We should not be saying, I will do this, or I will do that. But if the Lord will, I'll do that.

And just not use it as a, simply as a phrase. Adopt it in our thinking. If the Lord will, I'll do that.

And it's nice to hear people say that. I try to say it. And I catch myself sometimes saying, I'm going to do something, without saying, if the Lord will.

But I like to hear people say, if the Lord will, I'm going to do such and such. And James says, get in the habit. Get in the habit.

It's a good habit to get into. This man made that mistake. I'm going to do this.

He left God out of his plans. Well, let's think about the second mistake he made. He supposed that earthly goods could satisfy the soul.

Now, he's talking to his soul, and he's really, really talking to his body. But he's talking to his soul, and he even says soul. He says, verse 19, And I will say to my soul, soul, I'll have much goods later for many years, take thine easy, drink and be merry.

Now, he thought that material things could satisfy the soul. And they can't. God has created you and me in such a way that only he can satisfy the human heart.

He's created us that way. Our deepest satisfaction will come in our appreciation of the Lord and who he is, what he is to us. And we're glad that we have him.

He's ours, mine. To have and to hold, to love, to enjoy, to serve. Now, this man made that mistake.

He thought that earthly goods could satisfy the soul. The Lord speaks, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger.

He that believeth on me shall never thirst. Do you think he's talking about physical hunger? Does that mean that a Christian never gets hungry physically? Of course not. I get hungry.

I don't stay hungry very long. I admit. But I do get hungry once in a while.

But he's talking, this man's talking about his soul. He's making a mistake. The Lord can only satisfy the soul.

And he wants to satisfy the soul. If any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink. Now, I don't think he's talking about physical water.

I think he's talking about the satisfaction of the soul. And people pursue pleasure and they pursue this and they pursue that. And I think I have these experiences too.

When I used to be in the business world, government business, I used to look forward to my vacations. I used to get tired of the old grind. And I used to look forward to my vacations.

And I would plan my vacations well. And I found out that when I came home that all vacations were were to make you so tired that you were glad to get home again and get on the job. And I... Vacation happened to be a disappointment.

Many, many times it was a disappointment. It was just a change of pace. That's all.

But you know, I think that I have that experience that even after, oh, what shall we say, even after a Christmas experience with the family, and I'm just glad that I still got the Lord. I don't know whether... Have you ever had the experience of going to a Bible conference and meeting a lot of people and just having a wonderful, wonderful time and listening to the ministry, but you were just glad to get back home and get to your Bible again? Get to pray it again on your own? You know, God can satisfy the soul and He's the only one that can satisfy it. This man was addressing his soul when he was really talking about his body.

Material things don't satisfy. I think I've told you folks here about a sign that I saw on the bank in Boulder, Colorado. I'm sure I told you.

If I did, don't stop me because I'm going to tell you again. I saw this sign by the teller's window. And of all things to see it in a bank, money will give you everything but happiness and take you everywhere but heaven.

Imagine seeing that in a bank. Somebody had some good sense. Really, our happiness is in the Lord.

Rejoice in the Lord. And again I say, rejoice. Now, this man was talking and he said to his soul, and then the third mistake, he was absolutely and entirely selfish.

We have the word my just about as much here as we have the word I. He says, This will I do, I will pull out my barn and build greater and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, So thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine easy, drink and be merry.

My, my, my. He was selfish. Now, that's the way to be absolutely miserable.

To be thinking about your own needs all the time and not thinking about anybody else's needs. The selfish person is an unhappy person. I was struck by what your manual said about this lesson.

That this thing afflicts, this selfishness, this self-centered occupation lasts from the nursery to the nursing home. And believe me, it does. If there's anybody that's demanding at all, it's people that have entered their second childhood.

Everything revolves around them. Even the whole family schedule revolves around them and their needs. Now, you and I will not be happy if we are thinking about our own selfish needs all our lives.

We as Christians are here to give, not to get. And that will bring us the most pleasure in our lives when we can do something for somebody else. We become most like the Lord under those circumstances.

He speaks about my. My, my, my. Myopia.

This man had eye trouble. It was eye, eye, eye. And strangely enough that he had myopia.

You know what is myopia, don't you? It's short-sightedness. It's when your eye is focused too short and you have to get things up close. My, the person that uses my, my, my all the time has myopia, spiritual

myopia.

He's short-sighted. The way to be happy is to serve other people. Be useful.

And not to be thinking about ourselves all the time. Say, I sound like I'm preaching. I don't mean to sound that way.

I'm just talking and talking to myself. Do you want to listen in? All right, if you want to listen in, all right. I'm really talking to myself.

You suppose I'm any different from you? As faith answers to faith and water, so the heart of man to man. We're geared to light. So he's selfish, extremely selfish.

Did I ever tell you about a young woman that we had in Boulder? She was so selfish that she pouted that her, actually her lower lip protruded most of the time until I think it actually got bigger. It seemed to me it was. And she would kick her mother to get her out of, kick her in the shins to get her out of the chapel.

Get her on the way home. She didn't want to be there all the time. And she was about the most ill-mannered girl I ever saw.

But you know that girl got married and she had some children. And you know that really changed her. Now, I've got to be careful when I'm talking about this.

Children are the business of the parents. I'm not saying that people shouldn't be married and have a dozen children. But I sure wish that she could have had a dozen because those three or four that she did have did so much for her, she got out of that my syndrome, if I may put it that way.

She got away from that my disease. She got to taking care of her kids. And you know, I got to thinking that that girl was good looking.

She got away from my opium. She got to doing things for somebody else. And you know that's Christianity.

It's doing things for other people. Giving. Giving out.

Well, the last mistake that he made was probably the most terrible of all. He thought he had much time. He says, well, the Lord says that he says.

We're going to take the Lord's word for it. I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

He thought he had a lot of time and that was a mistake because the Lord said, thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee. He said many years. The Lord said this night.

It was a mistake, wasn't it? He made a mistake. Now, we can profit by the mistakes of this man. We can realize, and the thrust of what the Lord is saying, I don't feel that I've overemphasized it although I never like the thought of preaching at other people.

But I get it. I get the thrust of this. May God help you and me to be in this world for some other reason than satisfying our own needs and our own wishes and our own wants.

May we be exercised about pleasing the Lord, making Him the portion of our hearts. And then we'll be happy. That will be the happy life.

That will be the fulfilling life. That will be the life that the Lord saved us to live, shall we pray. Father, we do thank Thee for the Lord dealing with this problem that this man had.

We pray that we might be rich toward our God and not be so self-centered. We just commit ourselves in this word to Thy blessing and Thy leading and Thy guidance. Lord, help us.

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