

Are You Playing the Fool Part 1

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon warns against playing the fool and encourages listeners to seek to be rich toward God by experiencing a radical heart circumcision by faith and being infatuated with and conquered by the love of God.

Duration: 49:20

Scripture: Luke 12:15

Topics: "Warning", "Self-Reflection", "True Wealth in God"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of self-reflection in his sermon 'Are You Playing the Fool Part 1,' urging listeners to examine their own hearts rather than thinking of others who may need the message. He warns against the spiritual snare of covetousness, using the parable of the rich fool from Luke 12 to illustrate how one can be rich in possessions yet poor toward God. Beach encourages the congregation to seek true wealth in their relationship with God, highlighting that being rich toward God requires a heart transformation and a willingness to let go of worldly desires. He calls for a desperate cry for God's presence, reminding believers that true fulfillment comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit and living for Christ alone.

Transcript

Book of Luke. We're going to be looking at Luke chapter 12 and many verses here. But I am asking the Lord to speak to our heart and to be sure that we do not listen to the word of God this morning with this attitude.

Oh, I wish brother so-and-so were here because my how this is applicable to him. Or, sister so-and-so, I'm going to get this tape and send it to him because boy, this really addresses her. While that might be true and maybe you will know of a person, I am quite persuaded this morning that the Lord would want us to first and chiefly ask him to take the message and speak to our own hearts.

Address ourselves this morning. Because there is a very, very, very deep desire within the Lord's heart this morning for His people. It is a desire that is born out of the heart of God that is birthed because of the love of God.

He has an intense desire for you and I this morning. And we're going to address a snare that we all must be very careful of because it is this snare that prevents us from coming into God's full intention. Now, if each and every one of you, along with myself, had entered a race and it was the goal of our hearts to win

that race, wouldn't it be reasonable? Young people, listen here.

You guys are in tune with this stuff. If you were in school or you had entered some community event and it was a race, now how many of you would enter without wanting to win? None of you. We simply don't do that.

We enter a race to win the race. I don't think there's one person who enters the Boston Marathon or the New York City Marathon and comes to the starting line and says within himself, well, I really don't care if I win or I don't care if I do good. I don't think that that's really prevalent.

I think the intent is to win. Well, the Bible says in Hebrews that we're running a race and that we are to run patiently the race that is set before us. In Corinthians, Paul tells us in chapter 9 that we are to run that we might win the race that is set before us.

We are running a spiritual race this morning. Now, just like you would want to know, young people, that if you had entered a race, if there was something that you needed to be aware of in order to prevent you from not winning that race, you'd want to know, right? Like, for example, what if you had a bad sneaker? You didn't know it and somebody came and said, listen, that sneaker's going to be a bum sneaker and it's going to hinder you from running. You'd say, well, get me a new pair of sneakers.

Or maybe you were running in the dark and someone came and said, listen, after a mile of running, you're going to come to a road and there's going to be potholes all over the road. Now, I want to encourage you to be alert because if you're not, you'll run into a pothole and you'll twist your ankle and you probably won't win the race. Now, anybody in their right mind would want to know if there was something that would hinder them.

Likewise, beloved, there is something that is hindering us spiritually from laying hold of all that God wants us to have and this morning the Lord in His mercy and in His grace is letting us know. So that together as a family, we can help one another and encourage one another that we might run the race patiently that is set before us and win that race. Amen? Luke chapter 12.

The title that I actually feel was laid upon my heart in relation to this is Playing the Fool. Playing the Fool. Verse number 13, Luke chapter 12.

And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who has made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

And he spoke unto them a parable, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. 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, 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, Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Playing the fool. This story opens up with a few brothers asking Jesus for some advice. They had an inheritance.

One of them said to Jesus, Lord, would you please tell my brother to share the inheritance with me? Something we quickly learn about the Lord Jesus. Listen carefully, beloved. Many, many times when we come to the Lord, He does not give us the answer that we expect.

These brothers thought it to be quite reasonable, at least the one did, to ask Jesus a question. He thought for sure, well, Jesus will surely side with me because it's quite obvious that my brother is being unjust in relation to the inheritance, and we know that Jesus is a just teacher, He's a just man, and that surely He's going to admonish my brother. Yes, young man, you need to be just and honest with your brother.

You need to divide it properly so that you're both happy. And many times we come to the Lord and we inquire of Him and we sort of are hoping He's going to say something to us. We're sort of hoping that He's going to address a certain issue.

We actually come to Him hoping to place His blessing on our plans. But may we be assured this morning that as we come to know the Lord, and we come to walk with the Lord, and we come to know the voice of the Lord, as He speaks to us through His Word and by His Holy Spirit, that many times when we come to Him with inquiry, with questions, He responds in a way that blows our mind. When these brothers came to Jesus, Jesus addressed the heart issue.

He wasn't so interested in a fair inheritance as He was the condition of the hearts that He saw. And that's what resulted in Jesus making this profound statement in verse number 15, Take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses.

But Jesus, I wasn't asking you about covetousness. I wasn't telling you, Lord, that I was going to make this inheritance my whole life. I just want a fair inheritance.

Beware of covetousness, Jesus said. For a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses. And then He went on to tell a story.

So this parable is, listen, this parable is addressing the very issues of the heart of these two young men. The parable is very short, about a certain man who prospered greatly and said, what will I do with all of this prosperity? I know what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and I'll have bigger barns and I'll say to my soul in verse number 19, soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years.

Take thine ease. Relax. Enjoy thyself.

Eat, drink, and be merry. And then Jesus refers to this particular heart condition and says this, God said, you see the contrast between the man said and then God said. When men say, as did the man in this parable, God responds by saying, fool, fool, thou fool.

You see, beloved, the fool says to his soul, be at ease. Relax. Enjoy thyself.

The fool says to his soul, eat, drink, and be merry. The fool says, live for the moment of pleasure. But God says, thou fool, this night your soul is required of you.

And verse number 21, so is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. Now let me ask a few questions, please. Have we played the fool? Are we playing the fool? There is a contrast in

verse number 21 that enables us to know whether we are playing the fool or not.

The contrast is laying up treasure for himself versus not being rich toward God. The contrast there is either we are laying up for ourself or that we are rich in ourself or we are rich toward God, one or the other. So the question this morning that we need to ask ourself through this story, which is going to lead us to the next point, is this.

What am I really after? What am I really desiring? What is the condition of my soul today? Am I in fact seeking to make myself rich at the expense of not becoming rich toward God? If that is the state of our hearts today, then what we must pray is that God will by His power and by His grace deliver us from this condition so that we can become candidates, so that we can become vessels able to become rich toward God. We are living in a day, we are living in an hour when there is a tendency to neglect becoming rich toward God and go after becoming rich and full for ourself. And we must be guarded against this condition lest we find ourselves in the state of the fool.

Now this fool very well could have been a religious person. He could have attended church, he could have sung, he could have done nice and kind things. But that did not make him rich toward God.

Matthew chapter 6, beginning in verse number 19, Matthew chapter 6. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. That's interesting because this fool had laid up treasure for himself and was not rich toward God.

But now Jesus said that we are to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. So there is a way to become rich toward God. There is a way to store up treasure in heaven.

There is a way to become wealthy in God. And that is the wealth that we are to be seeking after. Where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew chapter 13. Matthew chapter 13, verses 44, 45, and 46.

Beginning in verse 44. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field. The man, when a man hath found, he hides, and for the joy thereof goeth and sells all that he hath and bought the field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Now, the outstanding characteristic that we see in verse 44, 45, and 46 has to do with a heart desire that was after treasure.

And when they found the treasure, it says in both accounts they sold everything they had and they purchased that treasure. This pictures the kind of heart that the Lord wants to fashion in each one of us this morning. This is the kind of heart that will keep us free from playing the fool.

This is the kind of heart that will deliver us from the snare that will prevent us from finishing the race and winning the prize. I'd like to invite you to turn your Bibles to Philippians chapter 3. Philippians chapter 3. What is it to be wealthy in God? Listen, beloved. What is it to be rich toward God? We have a perfect example in Philippians chapter 3 of what it means to be wealthy toward God.

Let's just allow the word to speak to us this morning, okay? Philippians chapter 3, beginning with verse number 7. Philippians 3, 7. We're going to answer the question, what does it mean to be rich toward God? Okay, listen carefully. But what things were gained to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

May God give us ears to hear and eyes to see. To be rich toward God is to be brought to the place by God's marvelous spirit in which the depths of our heart is able to cry out along with Paul, I consider the things that were gained to me loss for Christ. Those who are rich in God are not those who are religious, who outwardly engage in what many would maybe consider to be Christian activity.

The issue of being rich toward God is a heart condition where the Holy Spirit comes to us as a sharp two-edged sword. Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12. And the sharp two-edged sword so deals with us and so penetrates us and so lays hold of us and so apprehends us and arrests us.

We are enabled by the grace and power of God to be able to say the things that were gained to me I count loss. The things that were to my own selfish benefit, I count loss that I might know Him. A man or woman who is rich in God is one who has accepted the claim of Christ and has allowed the Holy Spirit to bring them to the place where they say, I am crucified with Christ.

It is no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me. Those who are rich in God are those who have come to where they've heard the Master say, If any man follow Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me. Those who are rich in God have seen that Christ is the treasure that we are to be after.

Christ, the Bible says in Colossians 2, verses 3, that in Him, in Christ, are hid all the treasure, all the wealth of God. To be rich in God is to experience a radical heart circumcision by faith. To be rich in God is to be infatuated with and conquered by the love of God and to say along with Paul, I do not count my own life dear to myself anymore.

Have you come to see that revelation that as servants of God and of Christ we are called to let go of what we are in our sinful selves and to lay hold of what Christ is and claim Him now to be our life. Claim Him to be our all and all. Hallelujah to God.

We are the temple of God. 1 Corinthians chapter 6. The profound revelation that came to the Jewish mind and blew it away. When Stephen preached this truth, he got stoned for it.

Why? Because he began to teach that God was going to change the customs and the traditions of the law of Moses. And that's exactly right. God did come to change all the traditions of the Mosaic law because all of those things that were written were shadows and types.

But then Jesus came and He said, It is I of whom all the law and the prophets spoke of. And now it is Me. You know Christianity is Jesus Christ plus nothing.

That's what Christianity is. Nowadays, it's not Jesus that's attracting us. It's not Jesus that attracts people to go to church.

It's what kind of music or what kind of programs. Remember, Jesus, the bride, that One that will be chosen to reign with Him, to lay for eternity Her head upon His bosom, will be infatuated with Him. She will love Him.

The sound of His voice will cause her heart to go pitter-patter, pitter-patter. It's Jesus. 1 Corinthians 6, verse number 19.

What? Don't you know? The Holy Spirit is saying, O ye Corinthians, do you not understand? Have you not seen that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? What a radical thought. These people came from a tradition that taught that God dwelled in the temple. And that the thing that was sacred was the building.

And that when we went into the building, we had to go through the laver, and we had to wash, and we had to offer a sacrifice, and then wash, and we had to have on special garments. And now all of a sudden, the Holy Spirit is saying, Don't you know that you're the temple of God? Listen, beloved. God does not dwell in temples made with hands.

God is not concerned about physical buildings. God is not in the business of building physical buildings. He is building a temple made up of living stones.

That's you and I. We are living stones. We are stones that literally possess the very life of Christ. Hallelujah.

That's the temple that God has His eye on today. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have of God. Ye are not your own.

You're not your own. You don't belong to yourself anymore. You don't have rights over your life.

You've been bought with a price. For you have been bought with a price. Verse 20.

Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's, playing the fool, versus laying up treasure in heaven. What are we doing? I count all things to be as rubbish. I count all things to be as dung, one translation says.

I count all things to be absolutely worthless, another translation says. To be rich in God is to have the Lord work that heart confession in you and in me. When that is what you are on the inside, it will affect everything that you do, everything that you say.

It will affect all the plans that you make. It will affect the way you order your day. It will affect the way you think.

It will affect the way you fellowship. It will affect everything about you. When God gets this revelation into our heart and shows us in order to be rich toward God, listen, it doesn't mean, well, I just do my part, I go to church and I pay my tithes and I give clothes to the people who are naked and I do this, but as long as I can have my life too, Lord, I'll share my life with you.

Lord, I'll give you this part of my life and I'll give you this part, but don't you put your finger on the very center of my being. Don't you put your finger on the very center of my life because it's still my life, God. You ever hear the young people these days? It's my life.

This spirit is seducing the church. It's not our life. You don't have the rights over your life.

If you call yourself a Christian, then you have become the servant of a master. His name is King Jesus. So to be wealthy toward God is not to appease the religious nature in us.

Be a Sunday school teacher. Go to church maybe twice a week. Pay your tithes somewhere.

Learn the Bible. And I'm wealthy toward God. Not necessarily.

Not necessarily. But to be wealthy toward God is to be conquered by the one who says, I am the Lord. To be wealthy toward God is to be overcome by the one who said, Be of good cheer, for I have overcome.

There are no overcomers until there are those who have been overcome. We must be conquered before we can be conquerors. And the Lord seeks to conquer us.

He seeks to overcome us by His love, by His mercy, and by His grace. Hallelujah to God. Playing the fool.

Unless we come to the place where we can say as Paul, by the grace of God, my life does not matter to me. The things that once were to my gain, now I consider them rubbish because it's Him alone that I'm after. Listen, unless God works that in our life, we will inevitably, without failure, we will play the fool.

Because if we've not seen the worth of the treasure that's in Christ, we inevitably will follow after getting rich in ourself and for ourself. And that puts us to sleep. It's either we see Christ and we count all things but loss and we're after Him, or we slowly but surely begin to play the fool and we become rich in ourself, but not rich toward God.

What shall we, how shall we respond to God's call? I'm going to close now, but I want you to turn to 2 Kings chapter 4. 2 Kings chapter 4. While in Romania, we went to a gathering of saints, a good number of saints, and as I was before the Lord, the Lord placed this upon my heart, and as a result, there was a tremendous sense of call to all of us to be after the Lord. 2 Kings chapter 4, verses 1 through 6, is a vivid picture of what will happen when God gets a people to where they are not playing the fool anymore. Let me tell you this truth in 2 Kings chapter 4 is dead to our ears as long as we are living in a state of foolishness in ourself.

Jesus said, Woe unto you that are fool. And when He said that, what He meant was, Woe unto all of us who are finding foolishness and satisfaction in things other than God. But when God can get us to where we are free from playing the fool, we've found the treasure in heaven and we're after it to the point where we're selling everything we've got and we're after Him alone, then God begins to minister the truth that's found in chapter 4 of 2 Kings.

Listen as I read. Now there cried a certain woman. I'm telling you, I wish we had two more hours.

There cried. She was crying. She was at the point of desperation.

She was at the point where she had nowhere else to turn. Her need was so prevalent in her eyes, she cried. She cried after the prophet.

She was desperate. She had no other place to turn until God gets us to the place where we can't turn to the left anymore. We can't turn to the right anymore.

We can't turn this way or that way. We're hedged in and there's nowhere to go but up and we cry out to God. Then God will hear from heaven and bring His Holy Spirit in fullness and we'll see a demonstration of His power and His glory that we've never seen before.

There's got to be a crying though. There cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha saying, Thy servant, my husband, is dead. And thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord, and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

Beloved, this is a cry of a woman who realized that unless God met her, she was going to become and her sons the slave to another man. And until we realize that unless God comes on the scene, we're going to become slaves to sin. We're going to become slaves to the world.

We're going to play the fool. We are going to play the fool. It's not a matter of, oh, I know that brother over there.

He better watch it. No. I, me, I'm going to play the fool if God doesn't come on the scene, if God doesn't fill me, if God doesn't get a hold of me, if today I am not drinking of water that comes from Him, I'm going to drink from the broken cisterns of this world.

Verse 1 shows us that the initial movings within the people of God that is a sign that God is going to bring oil from heaven is a desperate cry because they realize they will become the slave to something other than God unless God comes on the scene. A desperate heart. Oh, God.

Do you see that? You see that? She was going to be a slave. Do you see it? Do you dread and fear the thought of becoming a slave to something other than the will of God? If not, if that's not where you're at, then may God help us to get there because in vain do we pray, oh, God, give me the Holy Spirit if it's not springing out of that kind of need because if it's not, our motives are not right. We want it for another reason.

We want it because we want to be something. Oh, there's so many people praying for the anointing. Oh, my God, have mercy.

Give me the anointing. Give me the power. Bring a revival to our church, Lord.

Why? So everybody will think more highly than they should of us. That's not why we should pray for God to bring his revival to us. We should pray because we realize, oh, God, I've gone astray.

I've become the slave to something other than your will and it breaks my heart and I need you. And Elijah said unto her, what shall I do for thee? Oh, beloved, forgive me if I'm going a little long. Please forgive me.

It's been three weeks. I get a little grace, don't I? Whenever God's people get to where this woman was, God says, what shall I do for you? You know, before this state, if God ever says that, we'd ask him some crazy thing like James and John's mother. What did they want for their sons? Oh, we want to sit on your right hand and we want to sit on your left hand.

Until God breaks us, when God says, what can I do for you, we ask him some crazy thing. And he loves us, but that's why he doesn't say it very often. Can you imagine if God comes to us, what can I do for you today? Well, Lord, this guy cut me off today and you scraped my car and it's new.

You know what I wish, God? God help us, huh? That's the kind of stuff we'd be asking. Lord, you want me to call fire down from heaven and show them? Jesus said, chill out. He didn't say that, but that's the contemporary version.

You see, he didn't know what spirit they were of. What shall I do for thee? Tell me. Now, listen closely.

What hast thou in thine house? Listen, whenever the church gets to the point of desperation like this, God says, the answer to your problem is in your house. It's in your house. Now, I'm not talking about the place where you live.

It's in your house. What, know ye not that ye are the temple and that God dwells in you by the Holy Spirit? You see, when we're brought to the place where we are desperate, God says, what's in your house? And she said, just a little bit of oil. We see, we come to where we've got nothing but God.

Lord, it's only the Holy Spirit that can help me now. It's only your power. And then what did he say? He said, woman, go borrow vessels, but listen, make sure they're empty.

And as long as there are empty vessels, the oil will flow. Brothers and sisters, God is bringing us to the point where we realize through desperation that only God, only the presence and power of Jesus can be satisfied from anything other than God himself. And as long as the scripture says, as long as there were empty vessels, the oil kept pouring.

And it came to pass, verse six, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, bring me yet a vessel. And he said, there is not a vessel more. And the oil stopped.

The oil will stop flowing when there is no longer an empty vessel. Here it is, beloved, the closing to this message of thou fool. We are either filling ourself with that which makes ourself rich and we are bankrupt toward God or we have come to the crisis and we are living in that crisis where we count all things but loss, all things but dung, all things but useless.

We've seen Christ as our treasure and we've been emptied, emptied, emptied from everything. And in that state, there's a perpetual flow of God's oil into our house and you'll find that that oil delivered the woman and her family from being slaves. And that's what it'll do for us.

When God's power gets in us, it'll deliver us from slavery and we'll become the love servants of Jesus Christ, bound to do nothing but his will alone. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah to God. May the Lord grant us to partake of his word this morning and empower us to be before him.

Let's bow our hearts and pray. I know it's late. If you have to go, it's okay.

Let's just be before the Lord in his presence. Father, we commit this into your hands. If you do have time, beloved, we encourage you to just spend a few moments before the Lord and let the Holy Spirit confirm his word in your heart.

And Father, we commit this into your hands and pray, God, that you will minister to us. We confess our need for you, Lord, and thank you that you have the power by your grace and love to work this in us. And we look to you with open hearts for your enablement today.

In Jesus' name, hallelujah to God. Yes, Lord. God, we acknowledge our need, Lord.

Yes, Lord. Hallelujah. If you want special prayer, just respond.

Go to a brother or a sister, whatever. Yes, Lord. That's it.

That's it. Yes, Lord, only you.

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