

Luke 12:13-21

Introduction: Jesus emphasizes the importance of maintaining an eternal, Godward perspective throughout our lives. There is life beyond the grave.

Jesus reveals His wisdom in response to the man's request—12:13-15

- 1) The anonymous request—12:13
 - a) Luke keeps him anonymous—¹³ *Then someone from the crowd said to Him,*
 - b) He had been left out—*“Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me (emphatic).”*
 - i) He wants Jesus to act as his delegated authority in the matter and rule in his favor. He wants Jesus to do **his** will. Is this contrary to their father's will?
 - ii) He wants some, but not **all**, of the inheritance for himself.
- 2) Jesus' initial two-fold response—12:14-15
 - a) To the anonymous man—12:14 ¹⁴ *But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge (legally) or arbitrator (financially) over you^{pl}?”*
 - i) Jesus **does** have authority, but this role was not assigned to Him.
 - ii) This is the second time Jesus denied a request (cf. 10:38-42)
 - b) To the listening crowd—12:15 ¹⁵ *Then He said to them,*
 - i) The commands—*“Watch out and guard yourselves against greed,*
 - (1) Greed/covetousness—the desire for more than is necessary for your needs
 - ii) The reason—*“because one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”*

Jesus reveals Godward priorities—12:16-21 ¹⁶ *Then He told a parable to them, saying,*

- 1) The self-absorbed rich man—12:16-19
 - a) The anonymous, wealthy man—*“The land of a certain rich man ...*
 - b) His apparent reasonable dilemma; the rich man now has a superabundance
 - i) An exceptional harvest
 - (1) Blessing—*The land ... was very productive,* (cf. Deuteronomy 28:8)
 - (2) Business decision time—¹⁷ *and he deliberated in himself, saying*
 - ii) Not enough storage—*‘What should I do, since I have nowhere to store my harvest?’*
 - c) His self-absorbed solution—¹⁸ *So he said, ‘I will do this:*
 - Note all the first person pronouns
 - i) Preparation—*I will demolish my* (current) *granaries and I will build larger ones,*
 - ii) Self-focused
 - (1) False sense of ownership—*and there I will store all my produce and my goods.*
 - (2) False sense of security—¹⁹ *And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years;*
 - iii) Self-indulgent—*take it easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.”*

- (1) The comfort that allows the man to focus on himself is the product of greed. (Bock)
- (2) He apparently doesn't even consider meeting the needs of others.
- 2) God intervenes—12:20 ²⁰ *But God said to him,*
 - a) Identifies the rich man—*Fool!* [ἄφρων]
 - i) One who lives without taking God into account. They never ask, “What would God want me to do in this situation?”
 - b) He reveals His sovereignty and the rich man's accountability—*This night they* (probably God's angels) *will demand back your soul/life* (as a payment for a debt) *from you;*
 - i) To go back to the One who gave it.
 - c) He reveals the uncertainty of reality—*and now whose will those things be that you have prepared?*
 - i) You really do leave it all behind.
- 3) Jesus applies the lesson about self-centeredness—12:21 ²¹ *So is the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*
 - a) The pursuit of possessions has left him empty in terms of his ultimate priorities before God. (Bock)
 - b) The parable is not against wealth, but how wealth is used.
 - c) We must learn this truth: God's grace is the only lasting possession. (Ryle)
- 4) Psalm 49 (especially 49:6, 11-12)

Take-home truth: The one who trusts in God has genuine wealth.