

Title: THE RICH FOOL, LUKE 12:13 – 21  
(Chatham, NJ; 07/31/16, AM) [S-P, Life Situation Exegesis]

Theme: In the story of the rich fool Jesus demonstrates the power of covetousness to obscure and destroy a life worth anything to God.

Purpose: To speak the voice of society but contradict it with the voice of God, and in this way to point out that life does not consist in the wealth of possessions.

Introduction:

1. We know by experience that there are many voices in society that seek to provide guidance and meaning to our lives.
  2. From these voices we construct presuppositions that give meaning to us.
  3. The Book of Proverbs describes one of those voices as the voice of wisdom calling out at the head of the street (Proverbs 1:20-21).
  4. Can you hear her voice over all the other voices?
  5. Jesus' story about the rich fool illustrates wisdom on a very particular issue: possessions, wealth, and a life of true riches.
- I. The Family Dispute.
- A. The world says:
1. The story begins with a family dispute over inheritance money
  2. Can you envision the anger and family discord behind the man's request (Have the courts decided on Prince's money yet?)
  3. Notably Jesus refuses to arbitrate the dispute
  4. Family is a microcosm of what is often a bigger societal issue
  5. One school of thought says, "I have a right to what others have produced, so the government should take from them and give it to me."
  6. Call it a share the wealth scheme, an equitable distribution of goods, or some other fine-sounding name, but you still have a system built on jealousy of what others have; it is nothing more than legitimized theft
  7. Its root motivation is not justice, but what Jesus warns about here
- B. Jesus says:
1. Beware of covetousness!
  2. He does not judge the legitimacy of the man's dispute: whether the man is entitled to the estate, etc.
  3. Covetousness was serious enough to list it in the Ten Commandments, the tenth
  4. In Mark 7:22 Jesus lists it among the many things in the human heart that cause defilement, along with its cousins jealousy and envy
  5. Envy - painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage or possession
  6. Jealousy – hostility toward a rival or one perceived to have an advantage
  7. Covetousness – an inordinate desire for wealth, especially that which belongs to another
  8. This is not proprietary to any one economic status: rich and poor alike are prone to it
  9. Can you hear Jesus' warning?

## II. A New Definition of the Good Life

### A. The World Says

1. The rich have it best
2. The good life is in the abundance of possessions
3. We are bombarded with messages urging us to acquire the biggest, best, and latest
4. Just because people are beautiful, famous, and wealthy doesn't mean they have the good life

### B. Jesus says:

1. Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions
2. Jesus addresses what I call, "The American Dream run amok."
3. We are fortunate to live in a land of abundance and opportunity
4. People want to come here for that, and to make a better life for their children
5. But remember what Moses warned Israel about in Deuteronomy 6:10-12

## III. The Tragic End of a Foolish Life

### A. The foolish man says:

1. I've got lots of stuff
2. I should spend the rest of my life enjoying it: eat, drink, and be merry
3. This is after all the good life: having the best, eating the best, wearing the best, and enjoying merriment
4. This is not a stupid man, this is a foolish man

### B. God says:

1. Jesus warns us to be rich toward God, Luke 12:20-21
2. Store up treasures in heaven (Mt. 6:19-20); you can collect them when you arrive
3. Paul addressed the elders in Ephesus and ended his exhortation with Jesus words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts 20:33-35
4. Paul also says 1 Timothy 6:17-19
5. *This is the good life*

### Conclusions:

1. Have enough to provide for your family, but beware of wanting more and more.
2. Live simply: think about what you really need.
3. Store up treasures in heaven: think about how to use your possessions (whatever you have) to live a life of good deeds (Titus 3:8).
4. All of this looks toward a life after this one.
5. Anything that prepares you for the next life is "the good life."
6. Begin preparation for it by obeying the Gospel.