

Luke 12:13-34

I. Anxiety is a Common Human Experience

We all experience anxiety in varying degrees throughout our lives. Money is a common source of anxiety. Some of us have experienced the anxiety of living paycheque to paycheque, but there are many other ways to experience anxiety regarding finances, such as worrying about things like the national debt and inflation. Jesus addresses the topic of anxiety and money in the parable of the rich fool.

II. Trusting in God's Provision Frees Us from Worry

A man from the crowd asks Jesus, *"Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."* – **Luke 12:13**. Instead of granting his request, Jesus issues a warning against greed and then launches into a parable about a rich landowner. Why does this man's request prompt this particular response from Jesus? Land ownership was not simply about wealth, but it was also about your social standing within the community. His request is coming from a place of greed.

What is the point of the parable? Jesus tells us. He says, *"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God"* – **Luke 12:21**. This rich owner is a fool because he failed to account for God in his plans. He was living life on his terms, not God's terms. Only God knows what tomorrow brings.

More than just failing to account for God in his plans, the landowner also fails to account for the well-being of those around him. Darrell Bock says that "The essence of greed is keeping what resources God brings your way for yourself." This is exactly what the rich landowner has done.

When we become consumed with our physical needs, we rob ourselves of the joy of living. Jesus says, *"But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."* – **Luke 12:3**. Our focus, as disciples of Christ, should be on seeking first his kingdom, when we do this, our physical needs will be cared for as well.

When I worry about tomorrow, when I allow anxiety about my finances, or about the future, to creep into my life, I am showing a lack of trust in God. If God cares so well for the birds and the wildflowers, can I not trust that he is going to care also for me? Jesus asks, *"Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?"* – **Luke 12:25-26**. What has worrying ever accomplished in your life? The obvious answer is nothing. Worrying accomplishes nothing in our lives.

III. Is It Wrong to Want Security?

Do I need to sell all my possessions and give to the poor? No, although I do think God calls some people to do exactly that. I do think God calls us to live lives of generosity. It is not wrong to own things, but it is wrong to find our identity and self-worth in the things we own.

Is it wrong for me then to want to provide security for myself and my family?

Yes, it is wrong, **if** we allow that to become the focus of our lives.

We can't lose sight of the fact that our possessions belong to God, not us. When our focus is on seeking God first, and not on our possessions, then our desire for safety and security is found in God, not in the things we own.

IV. Make Generosity a Habit

We need to make generosity a habit, for "life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." God may not be calling you to sell all your possessions, but I think he does call each of us to be generous with the things we have, the things he has entrusted to us.

V. Be Willing to Take Risks

The rich young fool was condemned because he wanted to live a comfortable life. Darrell Bock says, "The spiritual life as Jesus sees it is not a life of comfort, but of risk, exposure, weakness and vulnerability." John Ortberg wrote a book on this topic called *If You Want to Walk on Water You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*. Jesus is calling his disciples to get out of the boat.

Each of our stories will be unique, yours will be different from mine, but the point is, that the life of the disciple is not a comfortable life, it is a life that requires taking risks, doing things outside your comfort zone, and trusting that God will provide when you step out of the boat.

Reflection Questions:

1. In what ways have you struggled with anxiety over money?
2. How has God provided for you in the past?
3. Are you living a life of generosity? Ask God to show you if there are some areas where he wants you to make generosity more of a habit.
4. Are you living a comfortable life? Are there any risks that God is asking you to make as his disciple?