

## Luke 12:13-34

“Be Encouraged, God Cares”

It’s crazy to consider but it’s true; what happens on earth makes a difference in heaven. That’s what we were learning when we left off last week. To confess Christ *on earth* is to have Him confess you *in heaven*, to deny Jesus on the earth is to have Him deny you in heaven; the things we do in the here and now, in the realm of what is temporary can make a difference throughout eternity.

Jesus sends the invitation out (Vs8) to whoever... God is not willing that *any* should perish but that *all* should come to repentance, therefore the appeal is made. “*Whoever* (Jesus says) *confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man will also confess before the angels of God.*” The bible is clear, “*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” Rom 10:9-10

Now as we made mention last week we realize that “confession” goes well beyond a verbal assent or acquiescence to a particular point or principle. To “confess” something is to “agree” regarding that thing. Which is to say that you agree with God concerning who Jesus is. He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. God in the flesh born of a virgin, lived a sinless life; took upon Himself the sin of the world, shed His blood, died upon the cross, was buried and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day He (being with out sin, death being unable to hold Him [because the bible tells us that the wages of sin is death but since Jesus never sinned it was impossible that death should hold Him]) He rose again becoming as it were the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits of the resurrection so that by faith in Him you and I can be forgiven of our sin, stand justified *before* God and accepted *by* God in Christ. Now I know that I just shared a mouth full, but to “confess” Christ includes *all* of that. It means I *believe* all of that in my heart, I *receive* all of that in my heart and I will lead my life reflecting all of that for the world to see.

You’ve been transformed; you’re a new creation in Christ, old things have passed away behold, all things have become new. God has sealed you with His Holy Spirit ... you are no longer a stranger, you’re a son, you’re no longer distant, you're His daughter and His Holy Spirit will be there with you, He will lead and guide you through life...these are the kinds of things Jesus is throwin down, there He is, making these kinds of things known to the multitude...check it out.

Vs13-14

It’s interesting how our minds can drift as we’re being taught the heart, the mind and the word of God isn’t it? If you think about it nothing should be more awe inspiring, more captivating, more able to arrest and hold collectively captive our attention than hearing the very word of God; learning the heart and the mind of our all powerful completely compassionate Creator.

Yet we're so easily distracted; our minds drift, other things grab our attention, we're thinking about personal problems or whatever. Jesus is here teaching on the holiness of God, the righteous judgment of God, the compassion/care and lovingkindness of God, the essential need to be in agreement with God concerning who Jesus is as the Christ and the eternal impact that, that kind of confession makes and this guy interrupts Him to say, "Jesus, my brother won't share! Tell him to divide the inheritance!" It's like, so much for the eternal perspective huh? What Jesus was saying evidently wasn't penetrating his heart; he was distracted. Consumed with what he considered to be an immediate need as opposed to throttling back and giving heed to the *greater need* of receiving the *heart* of God through the *word* of God.

So Jesus says, "Listen; I'm not getting in the middle of this and being pulled to one side as opposed to the other. I'm not here to settle disputes of sibling rivalry." Christ didn't come to mediate material matters; He came to lead us to repentance and to die for the sin of the world.

But what He does it take this and turn this for an opportunity to teach the people. There's something deeper here than what appears to be a *need* in this man's life and it's the *greed* in this man's life; notice.

Vs 15

If this Vs isn't underlined in your bible you do well to make it so. It's a word in due season to any one individually and all the more so for us as a community. I have discovered that God's timing is so perfect; He's consistently faithful to minister to us individually, where we're at as a body and also to the particular place we're at in this city.

Here we are; people picking their lives up (literally) out of the debris, thousands of homes destroyed; businesses gone, families displaced; everything people own, taken from them in a moment and when so many are wondering "what now?" Jesus issues a refreshing, refocusing reminder; "One's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses." If we've been reminded of anything in this season of life to which we've been called to endure surely it's the fragile, delicate and incredibly temporary nature of the things of this world.

How critical it is to consider where it is that we place our hope; God forbid it be in the things of this world. It won't last, and it doesn't satisfy

That's why Paul exhorts us in Col 3:2, "*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*" Don't attach yourself; don't allow yourself to be absorbed *by* and consumed *with* the things of this world. That's why we're so concerned about an increase in suicide over the coming months around here; because people who've placed their hope in this world, who've had their world ravaged and destroyed are walking around with nothing to live for. Listen to me, one's life does not consist in the abundance of *things*... (we'll hear more on this later, where the proper perspective lies Vs31-34)

Concerning our context here's what we need to see; it isn't that Jesus is unconcerned about justice; but that He is all too aware that this man's covetousness will do him more harm than not having his share of the inheritance.

So He issues the warning; “Beware of covetousness”. That is; “Be wise” concerning it, “Be sensitive” to it, “take note” of it. Why? What is it? Put simply it’s greed mixed with envy; you got it, but I want it... it might be your money, your possession, your position, your platform or power, it could be your spouse, covetousness has no bounds and respects no parameters. It’s an unquenchable thirst for more that refuses to be satisfied; it’s the polar opposite of contentment.

It wasn’t change in his pocket that this guy needed, it was change in his heart; he (much like humanity today) wasn’t asking Jesus to *save* him, but to *serve* him...

It’s not wrong to be wealthy but the bible is clear that there are many perils that come with prosperity. It can choke out the word of God; create snares and temptations and give you a false sense of security. Contentment will never be found in the things of this world, but only in a right relationship with Christ. That’s why we read in Hebrews 13:5 “*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*”

Listen to me, covetousness will destroy your life; and it contains the power to keep you from *eternal life*... It’s interesting how subtle that particular sin is. It’s ez for us to name things like adultery, homosexuality, murder and drunkenness as sins that defile us; but how often does covetousness come up on the list of things we think through? It’s subtle, but it’s all consuming.

Survey in your own mind that however often as you’re praying that God would forgive you for improper motives, or maybe your anger, your lust, that you’ve lied or whatever; how many times do *you* think, do *I* mention, “and God rid my heart of covetousness”? If you’re like me probably not too often; but again it’s the kind of sin that can keep us from the kingdom of God... Remember these words? “*But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*” Ephesians 5:3-5 Wow...it’s no wonder Jesus warns us, “Beware of covetousness.”

Vs16-21

Kind of reminds us of a particular proverb doesn’t it? “*Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, But righteousness delivers from death.*” Proverbs 11:4

What’s the primary problem with this man? Is it that he’s rich? No, that’s not sin. Is it that he’s making plans for the future? No, that seems wise enough. What is it then? Because as far as we’re concerned the ability to make money and even save money seems good; why then does God call him a fool? Because in the worlds eyes he was probably a *great* man...

His problem is the position of his heart; he’s all about self and he’s not inquiring of the Lord *at all*... The problem wasn’t that he laid up treasures for himself, but that He wasn’t rich toward God. We might say that “having” isn’t a sin, “hoarding” however, is...

He wasn't looking *to* the Lord; he was in no way trusting *in* the Lord; he was trusting in his *own* ability and the resources he'd acquired on his *own*. He was a "self made" man; in Vs 17-19 he makes some 13 references to himself, "I, I, I, my, my, my..." unfortunately there are no self made men in the kingdom of God.

As far as that goes who is it that gives you and me the ability to even obtain wealth? The bible states in no uncertain terms, "*And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth,*" Deut 8:18

This man made more than one fatal error; 1<sup>st</sup> of all he presumed he had (Vs 19) *many* years left to live; you and me, we aren't guaranteed later today much less many years. 2ndly he presumed that more money would bring him rest and satisfy his soul. It's a snare that so easily besets us; if we just had a little bit more *then* we'd be satisfied... It's not money that brings peace and/or satisfaction to our souls, it's a right relationship with God that comes only through Jesus Christ

Ultimately this man discovered that nothing belonged to him; even his own soul was subject to God who gave the very breath of life to him and was able to effectively take it from him. The bible teaches us that God is both the giver and the taker of life; that we've been appointed a day in which we will die and after that the judgment (Heb 9:27). Here's the point, if you live like this life is all there is (eat, drink and be merry) and set your focus upon yourself, you're a fool. That's what the bible teaches.

Don't ignore a right relationship with God; don't lay up treasures for yourself and not be rich toward God. Because the bible is clear that we brought nothing into this world and it's certain (1Tim 6:7) we can carry nothing out. We're to be rich in good works (1 Tim 6:17-19), using the talents and abilities God has given us not merely for our own gain but for His glory; we're to consider others above ourselves; trust in the Lord; lean not on our own understanding, seek *after* Him, submit our lives *to* Him and do what we do out of the overflow of love *for* Him (1 Cor 13).

Vs22-24

Btw Jesus is arguing here again from the lesser to the greater; if God provides for the least of His creation, how much more will He tend *to* and take care *of* His crowning achievement, which is you? This guy was worried about his inheritance (his life); many in our community perhaps worried about their lives, not sure how exactly they'll be provided *for* or taken care *of*.

If you are a child of God Jesus says, "Don't worry" (it's a command btw); how many times have we failed to obey *this* command?

Yet when we worry it demonstrates our lack of trust in the care and compassion of God toward our lives as His children. Stress/worry is a bad deal; it will impact you spiritually, it will impact you physically; and though it visits us all occasionally the fact is that it dishonors God and disobeys His word. Jesus says, "Don't worry about your life" and it's not a "don't worry be happy" "hakuna matata" (the problem free philosophy) here; it's not worrying because we have a loving heavenly Father who is greater than our need and we trust Him with our lives...

## Vs 25-28

Again, from the lesser to the greater; if God clothes the grass, the lilies of the field (that don't toil or spin, they don't labor for it) how much more will He take care of you (His child) who *can* (and should) labor for it?

Now Vs 25 reads "one cubit to his stature" which is about 18 inches, that seems significant to me. However it also could be understood as something more like "One day to his life" which would make more sense seeing as how I read that if you lived to be 70 and could add a single day to your life it would increase your life by something like .004% that's not much.

The idea being that it's pointless to worry anyway, it can't be in anyway beneficial for you, however it can be incredibly detrimental to you. God will take care of you, He takes care of the flowers, He'll take care of you. Now taking care of flowers demands more than sunny days of sweetness; if there's only sunshine and never any rain the flower will die. So to with you and so to with me, God knows what it takes to mold us and make us into the men and women of God He's called us to be. Sometimes its sunshine, other times it's rain; either way we trust in the Lord. But let's not preach faith and then fail to practice it...

## Vs 29-31

"Do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind." Paul said it like this, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*" Phil 4:6-7 We talked earlier about where the proper perspective lies; here it is; it's in being focused on and prioritizing the things of God more than what we consider to be the necessities of life and trusting in the fact that He cares *for* us and He's going to take care *of* us. Doesn't mean we cease every other pursuit and live in a monastery or convent; but that we do what we do for the glory of the Lord.

## Vs32

Let that Vs blow your mind! Over and over again Jesus is saying, "Be encouraged...God cares" Do not fear...it actually gives God pleasure, it pleases Him to give to you the kingdom...

## Vs 33-34

What's up with this, does God need your money? No, our Father owns the cattle of a 1,000 hillsides; He put the ore in the earth, it's all His anyway (it's not mine, it's not yours; nothing is yours, even your very soul is sovereignly subject to God). Jesus wants us to have the heart of our heavenly Father, His heart, that non-self seeking, giving, others oriented heart. If you want a heart, and I want a heart like God's heart, guess what? It involves giving; willfully, joyfully, cheerfully; the bible teaches that God *loves* a cheerful giver.

You say, “I have nothing to give” Jesus says, “Then sell something!” Don’t place a death clutch on the things of this world; you can’t take it with you anyway. But you can send it ahead of you. There’s a reason that people who buy and sell real estate are always looking at real estate; it’s because they invest in it. Your heart follows your treasure; as you invest in the things of God with your time, with your talents; with your treasure...your heart will follow

God’s pleasure and our treasure go together; if someone was giving you a home you’d invest in that home to make it the greatest home you possibly could. God is giving you the kingdom; do yourself a favor and invest in it...trust in the Lord, relinquish your cares over to Him, He cares *for* you and He promises to take care *of* you.

How do we invest in the kingdom of God; the 1<sup>st</sup> thing we invest is ourselves; after that God will reveal *to* you what it is that He desires *of* you. But the 1<sup>st</sup> thing you need to give to God is your life; you need to “confess” Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God who took your sin upon Himself that He might robe you in His righteousness. You need to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that as it is written, it shall come to pass that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved; God is reaching out to you in the person of Jesus Christ Let me encourage you to receive Him today.

#### Prayer Points:

Lord God we thank You for the comfort and for the encouragement we find in Your word. How You love us, how you’ve given Jesus Christ *for* us and have made joint heirs *of* us (of Your kingdom) in Him. Increase our faith and teach us what it means to be rich...toward You. May we not worry or have anxious minds but simply trust You and find our strength *in* You.

If God is speaking to your heart today and you don’t know that should you die today you would go to heaven you can have that assurance before you leave here today. God has loved you with an everlasting love, and He’s called you here to this place, at this time, on this day because He wants to forgive you of all of your sin and make you brand new. If you’re ready to repent (turn) of your sin and call upon Him today than lets’ not delay.