

It Is Your Father's Good Pleasure to Give You the Kingdom (v. 32)

Suppose you had a sudden windfall, the biggest one you could ever imagine, what would be your first thought about what you were going to do with it? Would you waste it on yourself, perhaps buying that boat you were wanting, or maybe add that extension on your house? Or would you suddenly thank God for providing enough to help the missionary your family has been praying for? Now, I am not trying to “guilt” you into where you spend your money. It makes no difference to me what you choose to do with your own possessions. That is between you and your LORD. But what I would like you to think about this morning is what is going on in your heart. Use my question this morning as a barometer to honestly measure or expose what it is that you hold most dear in your life. What is most important to you, especially in light of eternity?

For the man who approached Jesus out from the crowd, what was most important to him was that he got what was his (Lk. 12:13). Even his relationship with his brother came second place to the far more important matter of gaining more possessions in this life. For him, **Psalm 133** was of no concern:

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!² It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard, *Even Aaron's beard*, Coming down upon the edge of his robes.³ It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing—life forever (**Ps. 133**).

What's ironic about this man's request was that he was demanding that Jesus order his brother to be **more generous** with his inheritance, yet what is he (the man demanding his brother to share with him) being towards his brother? Stingy (wanting more) or generous toward his brother, willing to give up for the sake of his relationship with his brother? I don't know if you have ever had to witness a family fight over their inheritance OR a couple at war during their divorce proceedings but watching people fight over who is going to get more of the junk they have accumulated helps you understand how it was so easy for Cain to rise up and kill Abel (cf. **Gen. 4:8**) or for Jacob to steal the birthright from Esau (cf. **Gen. 27**).

Throughout the OT, Almighty God, Yahweh, Lord of hosts promised His people to one day, on the Day of the LORD, to send to them a new Davidic King, the Promised Messiah, to set things right in our world, beginning in the land of Promise. God would give His people new hearts so that they could now love God and love one another. The Messiah would give them peace from all their enemies and righteousness and justice would flow down upon them like the living waters of eternal life. Now, when that glorious day arrives and God's promised King appears, what do you expect the children of Israel to ask their Messiah? What kinds of things will they appeal to Him to do for them? What if God suddenly appeared before you, what would you ask Him to do for you?

This man asks Jesus - no tells Jesus - to make his brother give what he thought belonged to him (Lk. 12:13). It is not that approaching Jesus as a “teacher” or “rabbi” about such disputes was abnormal. It was often that folks sought out the local rabbi to help settle such matters because of their knowledge of the Torah (cf. Deut. 21:15-17; Num. 27:1-11; 36:7-9). If Jesus were merely a common man, such a request would have been an honor. What was strange was why they sought out Jesus for such trivial matters! God did not send His only Son on a mission **from Heaven's throne above to earth below** to divide up a family's inheritance. Of all the things this man could have appealed to Jesus to do for him, this is what He asks? Talk about blowing the most wonderful opportunity ever given mankind!

It's not merely that Jesus is far too smart to get in the middle of a family dispute. He certainly is! Rather, He knows why His heavenly Father has sent Him to earth and it is not to balance this man's checkbook (Lk. 12:14)! Clearly, Jesus is no mere rabbi, settling financial squabbles between two brothers. He is the LORD of all creation who has come to earth “to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found”!

Jesus begins with a warning (v. 15). “Beware!” “Be on your guard!” We might also add, “Be Aware” or “Be mindful” - the idea is “to be careful of getting into a dangerous situation that could hurt you”. What situation is that? Greed/covetousness – “the desire or lust to have more and more”. Why does Jesus characterize “greed” or “coveting” as something that we should “be on our guard” against less it hurts us? Why does Jesus see “greed” as an enemy out to destroy us? “Be on your guard, beware, of every form of greed”! There is a real danger, constantly lurking at the doorway of your heart and what it is seeking to do to you is possess you, control you, master you, make you its slave so that it may devour you and consume you and ultimately destroy you. The irony of it all is that greed only has the power to possess you that you choose to give to it. In the end, what you lust for – what you worship - is what you eventually become. The Psalmist cries out:

⁴ Their [the nations] idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. ⁵ They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; ⁶ They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; ⁷ They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. ⁸ **Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them (Ps. 115:4-8).**

That is why Jesus warns this man to “be on your guard” regarding “greed.” As we can see from what this man asks, greed will lead to disagreement and disharmony between people, even brothers (v. 13), and as we will see ultimately between man and God. Greed – the desire for an abundance of earthly possessions – distorts and twists what life is really about (v. 15). Life is not about things. Life is first and foremost about God and then life is about people. Life is about the other people God brings in your life. Your wife or husband. Your children and your parents. Your brothers and sisters. Your family and your neighbor. Possessions, which God gives to us, are not meant to divide people but to serve others in love. To define life in terms of objects or things is the ultimate reversal of the creature

servicing the creation and ignoring His Creator (Bock, 1150; cf. **Rom. 1:18-32**). What we worship is ultimately our god, our idol. That is why Jesus and Paul constantly warn us as Christians to be careful where we set our hearts (cf. **Col. 3:1-5; Eph. 5:5**). Our idols don't sit idly by. Once we empower them with our lusts and desires, they now have the power to control us and drive us to do things that are not pleasing to God, like fighting with our brother over something as worthless as an inheritance or a former spouse about who is going to get what in the divorce.

Life, real life, begins with God – the fear of God – and then from Him to humbly and lovingly serve our neighbor. Life was never meant to be about the accumulation of stuff. That is what Jesus means by “life” being much more than “the abundance of possessions”. Life is about others. That is what the cross was all about. Jesus did not come to serve himself or make himself rich. Rather, Jesus says:

“You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.⁴³ “But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you **shall be your servant**;⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you **shall be slave of all**.⁴⁵ “For even the Son of Man **did not come to be served, but to serve**, and to give His life a ransom for many” (**Mark 10:42-45**).

Paul reminded us:

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich (**2 Cor. 8:9**).

To help us see the heart of the problem here, Jesus tells a story about of foolish rich man (**Luke 12:16-20**). The purpose of the parable is clearly stated in **v. 21** – “so is the one who . . .” You can especially see the purpose of this parable in contrast with what Jesus is going to teach next by looking at **vv. 32-34**. When one trusts in this creation, what does he focus on? Himself. When one trusts in God, what does he focus on? Others, God and his neighbor. The Apostle John stated this contrast beautifully when he said:

¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (**1 John 2:15-17**).

You can divide Jesus' teaching here as **vv. 15-21** as an admonition to not love this world, while in **vv. 22-34** He is teaching us to love God and one another. To see why we are not to love this world, we need to look more carefully at Jesus' parable (**vv. 16-20**).

The story focuses on a man with a very productive land, who would have been greatly envied by all who were gathered around Jesus. This was an agrarian people. They knew what it meant to have such a prosperous land. This particular year, this richly blessed man had an unusually bumper crop. His dilemma was a good one to have (**v. 17**). This is the kind of problem anyone would wish upon himself. Almost any of Jesus' hearers would have loved to be in this man's situation. What was he to do with all the excess God so richly provided? Would he keep it for himself – following the motto

“he who dies with the most toys wins” or would he give it away to someone who needed it? What was in his heart? Whose kingdom was he seeking to build?

To see what a heart won over by the grace of God looks like, you only need to remember Zaccheus (**READ Lk. 19:1-10**). The overflow of gratitude for the grace Jesus showed to a sinner is seen by how Zaccheus now viewed his possessions. No longer is he going to defraud his neighbor in order to accumulate an abundance of more possessions for himself but rather, as did his new LORD, he wants to give to others out of thanksgiving to Jesus and love for his neighbor. Zaccheus became a hilarious giver if there ever was one (**cf. 2 Cor. 9:7**).

But not the man in Jesus' parable. He concluded just the opposite (**Lk. 12:18-19**). Now to get at the heart of what God says next (**v. 20**), you've got to be careful and see what this man ultimately trusted in. Look again at **v. 19** where he seeks to comfort his very own soul. With what does he look to to provide him safety and security in this world? We all want to feel secure and safe in this life. The dilemma is this: are we going to put our trust in what is temporary and passing away – things that will never last OR are we going to put our trust in God, who alone last forever? The rich man is a fool because he thinks that as long as his barns are full he can live a life of no worries. But is that the kind of life that God has called us to live? Is it really the goal of our life to “get all you can, can all you get, sit on the can, and poison the rest”? Shouldn't we be more concerned about what God requires of us and the kind of people He has called us to be? What are we going to do when we stand before Him? Don't we care more about what He thinks of us rather than keeping up with the Jones'?

This is why Jesus speaks so tenderly to His own disciples (**v. 22**). Jesus knows that the safety and security that the world is looking for in their possessions can only be found in God (**cf. v. 30**). We are anxious about our future – we fear loss or not having enough. To eliminate that anxiety we go to an extreme, storing up far more than we need – securing greater and greater possessions – in hopes that we will never go without. We live as if Jesus never said:

²⁴ “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. ²⁵ “For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? (**Lk. 9:24-25**).

We may not be atheist when it comes to our theological confession but practically before God we live our lives as if there is no God and no accounting of our lives before Him! We have forgotten that no matter what we are living for in this life, death ends it (**v. 20**). In fact, a good test to measure the true significance of what we are living for is to ask will death take it away?

But one of the characteristics of Jesus' followers is that we are not to worry about anything (**v. 22**). If this is a commandment of God – do not worry – then what is it called when we worry? Sin. Have you ever stopped yourself while you were worrying or were anxious about something and considered that what you are doing is a sin against God? And not merely a sin but a denial of His power and being. A very serious sin. So, why do we treat it so lightly?

Jesus gives us **five reasons** for why we should not worry about what we need. **First**, life is more than food or clothing (**v. 23**). Life is about God and living out His will in loving service to others. So why be overly concerned about what life is not? **Second**, you are far more valuable than birds (**v. 24**).

Think about how God cares for the birds, even the the ugly ones – ravens. Ravens belong to the crow family. I can't stand it when I'm looking at a peaceful scene of one or two red-breasted robins gathering food in the yard and a couple of huge, black crows swoop down and scare them off. Who wants to look at a yard-full of crows? God does! He feeds every one of them. The Psalmist says:

²⁸ You give to them, they gather *it* up; You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good (**Ps. 104:28**).

But do you really think that when God made the birds and then He made you and me that He considered the birds more valuable than you? The birds don't run about constantly worrying about whether or not there will be enough worms to eat. God takes care of every one of them. How much more are you assured that He will take care of you?

This brings us to the **third** reason Jesus gives us, namely, that worrying is pointless, useless (**v. 25**). Which of you, by worrying, can add a single moment to your life? Do you normally do things that are absolutely useless? I can remember when I was really bored in my high school Physics class, leaning back in my chair, and counting the holes in the tiles of the ceiling. And then one day I thought, what's the point of counting all these holes? What am I going to do with this knowledge once I complete the task. So why do we worry if it is just as useless? What are we going to do with all that wasted energy once we finished with worrying? Further, if you can't do such a small thing like adding a mere hour to your existence, why do you worry about other matters (**v. 26**)? If you live to 70 years, you will have lived out 613,200 hours of life. But you don't have the power to live add one more hour to your life so that you live 613, 201 hours? So if you can do a little thing like adding a little time to your life then why are you so worried about all these other things? When you look at a problem or a specific need in your life, isn't it easier to simply ask if God has provided what I need to solve this problem or meet this need? If He has, then thank God and do what needs to be done. If not, then don't worry about it. God will fix it as He ordains. Trust Him!

Jesus then tells you to consider how God marvelously clothes the grass with the most beautiful flowers of the field (**vv. 27-28**). Some commentators think Jesus may be pointing to the purple anemone, which would compare to the royal robes of an ancient king like Solomon (**v. 27**). But think how temporary is the grass of the field, especially if it is dried out and used to fuel an oven. And yet, if God would clothe the grass with such beauty, do you really think He is going to let you go without what you need? O you of such small faith! I know this is hard for many of you to believe, but there are many things in your life that are out of your control. In fact, God will sometimes bring difficult things into your life to teach you a very important lesson: You're not Him! So don't worry about these things (**v. 29**).

This then brings us to the **fourth** reason why we are not to worry: your heavenly Father knows that you need these things (**v. 30**). Think about what Jesus is saying here, especially in light of all that we learned about his teaching us how to pray (**cf. Lk. 11:1-4**). Jesus' Father is your Father. He loves you the way He loves His own Son. Do not worry. He knows that you need these things. And if He knows, don't you think He is going to provide you with what you need? After all, your earthly fathers took care of your needs (**Lk. 11:11-13**). Do you really think they cared about you more than your heavenly Father? So, don't worry about these things.

So why are you wasting so much energy seeking after these things that your heavenly Father are already going to give you? The pressure is off of you. Stop worrying about them. You have been freed from being consumed by what is passing away so you can now use your energy on things that are permanent (v. 31). Live for God in a manner that brings Him glory! Enjoy Him and serving in His Kingdom trusting that whatever you need to give glory to Him, God will provide for you.

Now, think deeply about what Jesus says next (v. 32). "Do not be afraid, little flock" - doesn't that beautifully bring to mind Ps. 23:

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. ³ He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, **for You are with me**; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me (Ps. 23:1-4).

Why does Jesus have to constantly tell us not to worry and not to be afraid? Because we don't believe Him. We find His promises to us too incredible. It just can't possibly be true that we don't have to worry. That we can truly trust God!

As His children don't you find it often difficult to know how to pray for God's will? Wouldn't you like to know what you can pray that God is certain to answer? Well, here is one request where Jesus tells you it is God's desire to give you (v. 32) – it gives the Father great joy to give you the Kingdom! So, what's there to worry about? Oh, maybe if you are building your own kingdom, then there is plenty for you to worry about because God has not promised to give you YOUR kingdom. But if it is God's Kingdom that you are seeking – then you have nothing to worry about – God delights in giving you His Kingdom and He will give you with it, whatever you need to get there.

When you get this, that your heavenly Father loves you, far more than you can ever imagine, and He will take care of you, so don't worry about these things – that frees you up to now go out and focus on others – to love others and serve them as Jesus served you (v. 33). What is it that you treasure? Is it more stuff for you to stuff in your stuff? Or is it Jesus and what makes Him happy? Jesus loves people and He has given you the Kingdom. What are you going to do with it?

Let me ask you all a serious question. I want you to all think about this for a moment. What if your entire life was a test? You could go back and watch the whole of your life. What if God gave you just what you needed of the basic necessities of life and then every once in awhile He gave you a little more to see what you would do with it? He wanted to see what you were made of? Would you spend it on yourself or use it to serve and love others? Where is your heart? That is where your treasure is! Are you investing in merely earthly treasures that will very soon burn up and blow away? Or, are you investing in eternal, permanent treasures of the Kingdom of God?