

# The Parable of the Rich Fool

by Gerald Griffiths

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*The parable of the rich fool warns against the delusion that surplus equals security and calls us to acknowledge God and depend on Him.*

**Duration:** 24:42

**Scripture:** Luke 12:13

**Topics:** "Wealth And Possessions", "Eternal Security"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a parable told by Jesus about a prosperous farmer who had a bumper harvest. The farmer's success led him to believe that he was secure and could enjoy a comfortable retirement. However, God spoke to him and called him a fool, reminding him that his life could be demanded from him at any moment. The preacher emphasizes that no amount of wealth or possessions can provide true security in the face of death and judgment. The sermon serves as a warning to prioritize being rich toward God rather than storing up earthly treasures.

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## Transcript

Thank you very much, it's a great privilege to be allowed to share the best news in all the world with you this morning. Before I do that I would like to express gratitude on behalf of my dear wife Mrs. G and her board for the support of this congregation. In the missionary work of Bible Stories Alive, you can read about it on the web, [visitwithmrsg.org](http://visitwithmrsg.org), you can listen to the program every Saturday morning on Joy Radio and on WDCX 99.5 on the dial at 11.15. We are tremendously grateful for the support of this church and I'm sure my wife would like to express thanks to every one of you.

The mail comes in from some 200 countries, it's vast. And the other morning Mrs. G, when she was reading the mail, came to my desk which is near hers and said, would you read this? It was a letter from a lady, a supporter of the ministry in Oshawa. She is, I believe, in her mid-80s, 85, and she has been a Christian for over 70 years.

During those 70 years she has prayed and tried again and again to win her sister to the Lord, with no success. But some days prior to her writing this letter to Mrs. G, she had very good news. Her sister, who is 94, phoned her and said, I have good news for you.

I have now become a Christian. I have been listening to Charles Price on Living Truth. I don't suppose you have an idea concerning the outreach of that ministry.

Last year, I think it was, I had the privilege of preaching here and the program was televised. And I was just astonished that wherever I went, I met people who were not believers who said, I listen to you, I listen to Charles Price. The outreach is enormous.

Charles Price is God's gift to this church and to this whole city and the greater Toronto area. And because he is so gifted in the proclamation of the Lord's Word and is being so widely used, it follows that he will be a special target of Satan. I've not been in the ministry as long as I have without recognizing the reality of satanic attack.

And I would urge you to pray lovingly and consistently for this very special servant of the Lord, that God will protect him, keep him at the feet of the Lord Jesus, and speak to him through his word that he may speak in living tones of the Savior's voice. Pray for him. And I'm so happy, and my wife is, and my family, that you have the benefit of his ministry from time to time.

We are turning this morning to Luke's Gospel chapter 12 and reading verses 13 to 21. Luke's Gospel chapter 12, verses 13 to 21. Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

Jesus replied, Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you? Then he said to them, Watch out. Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

And Jesus told this parable. The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.

Then he said, This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, You have plenty of good things laid up for many years.

Take life easy. Eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, You fool.

This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself and is not rich toward God. It's rude to interrupt a person when he is speaking.

The Lord Jesus is speaking to his disciples on the beach, on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, with thousands upon thousands of people listening in, the crowd, the uncommitted crowd. Jesus is speaking to his disciples with this crowd listening in. He tells his disciples that they will soon face persecution, and he tells them what to do.

Don't fear men who can only kill the body. Fear God who has the authority to cast into hell. Anyone who acknowledges me publicly before men will be acknowledged by the Son of Man before the angels.

Anyone who denies me will be denied in the last day. You have nothing to fear from men. God will take complete care of you.

The Holy Spirit will give you every word that you need to say. That's what Jesus said to his disciples on the eve of persecution. There was one man in the crowd who wasn't in the least bit interested in heaven and hell and judgment and God's care and the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

He had more urgent things on his mind. Cows, sheep, goats, barn, land, wheat and barley. His father had died and his brother, older brother, the executor of the will, had not done the right thing by him, so he thought.

He had not given him what he ought to have. So now he rudely interrupts the Lord Jesus in the middle of his instruction to his disciples. Rabbi, he says, teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me, to give me more.

But Jesus said, no, I'm not a licensed rabbi to settle family property disputes. And then the Lord turned now to this great crowd. And it's so important for us as we follow the rest of the story to remember that this is not being said to the disciples.

It's being said to the crowd, the uncommitted crowd. And now the Lord Jesus, from being teacher to his disciples, takes on the role of being evangelist to lost people. And he turns to them and he says to them, watch out, be on your guard against every form of greed.

Greed is simply the lust to get more and more and more. And the Lord warns the disciples of this because, I'm sorry, warns the crowd of this because humans so easily get deluded. Some years ago, when I had the privilege of being a pastor and a regular congregation, we had from time to time a lady who visited the congregation who believed that she was Eve.

She was the mother of the human race. And as the mother of the human race, she would write me long letters telling me what I ought to preach and how I ought to preach. She was deluded.

Other people are deluded thinking they're Adam, their father of the human race, and some Abram Lincoln, and some even the Lord Jesus himself. Now, psychotic people are subject to delusions. But sane people are also subject to delusions.

And unconverted people who have not been illumined by the Spirit of God are subject to this particular delusion. The Lord says to them, watch out, be on your guard against this lust to have more and more. What delusion? The delusion that surplus equals security.

For the Lord Jesus said, a man's life does not consist of, does not depend upon, the abundance of his possessions. Or as another translation puts it, a man's life is not made secure by what he owns even when he has more than he needs. Now, that's a delusion that unconverted people who belong to the crowd so easily fall into.

A husband and wife are so anxious to save money. They don't spend. They pay off the mortgage quickly.

They save what money they can in the bank and invest it in order that they will be able to retire with what is called a competence, that they will have an income to live comfortably on. And if it happens that a rich relative dies and leaves the fortune, or if they won the lottery with five million dollars, hip hip, hooray. Now I am, we are safe.

We are secure. That's a delusion, said the Lord Jesus. Because all the money in the world will not offer you security as you face the two inescapable realities of life.

Every human being on planet earth must face two inescapable realities. And our Lord's great concern is security in the face of those inescapable realities. These are put very simply in the Bible as you know.

It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment. Two appointments every human being must face. There's no way in which we can avoid death and judgment to come.

And Jesus says all the money and all the property in the world will give you no security against those two inevitable and solemn realities. Then Jesus tells this story, the story about a man who was a prosperous farmer, who had bumper harvest. The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop.

He had a problem. He thought to himself, what shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. I have no place for permanent storage.

Because he was looking for long-term storage. And as you know, you can store wheat and barley and other commodities long term. Joseph did that when he built those warehouses in Egypt.

And this man, in addition to his grain, was going to store other things. Maybe his grapes in terms of raisins and wine. Maybe his olives in terms of olive oil.

Maybe figs and dates. But he'd got wealth and he wanted to store it long term. How would he solve the problem? He solved it.

He says, this is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones and there I will store long term all my grain and my goods. Big warehouses which would be vermin proof, which would be ventilated, which would be dry and there would be long-term storage for his wealth.

And now the psychological response to the solution? He saw the whole thing done and he said, now I can give good news to myself. And he talks to himself. I'll say to myself, you have plenty of goods laid up for many years.

Now take your ease, relax, eat, drink and be merry. Fun, fun, fun. No work.

And he goes home that night very pleased with himself, saying to himself, I've done it. I've achieved my goal, security. Nothing can rob me and ruin me now.

No plague, no pests, no bad weather, no collapse in the markets. I'm so rich. Nothing can ruin me.

Congratulations to me. Well done, boy. Well done.

You are secure. And then he went home and he had his supper and he went to bed and he fell asleep purring these sweet thoughts concerning his success and his security. What a happy time he was going to have in this long retirement that spread out in front of him.

And then in the middle of the night he woke up. What's that? Who's speaking? Now he's wide awake. It wasn't a dream.

It was a real voice. A voice he hadn't heard before, perhaps. Certainly a voice he hadn't heard for a long time.

You see, he'd been so busy making money, preparing for his long retirement, he had no time to listen to that voice. But now he had to listen. God, was speaking to him.

And God said to him, you fool. I'm not a fool. My wife thinks I'm a very wise man.

And my neighbors do. And my fellow farmers do. I'm a first-class farmer.

I can detect the weather and I understand the soil and I know when to buy and when to sell. And I'm a good money manager. I'm no fool.

But God knew that. And God was not suggesting that he was a conventional fool. He was suggesting that he was a fool in a much more serious sense.

He was a tragic fool. He was a fool in the sense of Psalm 14, verse 1. The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. He was an atheist.

Now, not a formal atheist. He might have gone to the synagogue and repeated the creed. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

He was a practicing atheist. A fool, according to the scriptures, is a man who does not acknowledge God. A man who does not depend upon God.

A man who thinks of himself as being autonomous, doing his own thing, able to manage his own affairs without any help from anybody else. He was a practicing atheist. And I want to suggest to you that many in the crowds of today are practicing atheists.

When you read what he says here, you can tell what his creed was, the creed of a practicing atheist. What does he believe in? First, I believe that everything I have belongs to me. He talks about I, I, I, my, my, my, my barns, my crops, my.

It's mine. Wrong. Where did he get strength from and skill from to be a successful farmer? Where did he get the soil from? Did he manufacture it? Where did he get the seed from? Where did he get the sunshine from and the rain? Did you learn that little rhyme? Back of the loaf is the flour.

Back of the flour, the mill. Back of the mill, the rain. The wind and the shower and the sun and the Father's will.

What do we sing at harvest festival time? All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above. It's not true. The very breath that we bear, as the scripture says, what have you got that you did not first receive? And if you first received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift? Everything is a gift.

And a man who thinks this is all my own work deserves the name God gave him, a fool, out of touch with reality. Point number two. I believe that everything I have belongs to me for my own enjoyment.

What's he concerned about? The poor in the community? No. The surplus is for his own enjoyment. That's his problem.

I'm looking for long-term storage. There was plenty of storage, as someone put it, in the stomachs of the hungry. But he wasn't interested in that kind of storage.

He was only interested in storage that would enable him to enjoy what he had. He says, take it easy now. Relax now.

Enjoy yourself. Eat, drink, and be merry. Wrong.

The scripture says very clearly, let every man work. There shouldn't be any idle rich people around. And the fact that a person has got enough to live on doesn't mean to say that he should be idle for the rest of his days.

In Ephesians chapter five, the scripture says very clearly, every man should labor, doing honest work. For what reason? That he may have something to give to the needy. As John Wesley put it, earn as much as you can, to save as much as you can, to give as much as you can.

Surplus is not for self-indulgence. Surplus is for sharing. Fool.

I believe that everything I have is for my own enjoyment for a long time. And he saw these golden years stretching before him. He and his wife were going to have a great time just enjoying their money and what it could buy for them.

And God said, you fool. To continue this message, please turn to side two.

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