



Behind this, another issue is hiding. Fear.

What might the man have feared?

Poverty, loss of standing, or maybe that God would not provide for him when he needed help. He feared for his future and perhaps that of his family.

What should you do with these kinds of fears?

The passage does not tell us that riches are wrong; it was the way the man interacted with his riches that was wrong.



Verse 29 uses the phrase "Set your heart."

What shouldn't you set your heart on?

What should you set your heart on?



Do not trust in extortion or put vain hope in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them. Psalm 62:10

Wealth and food and clothes need to be on the outside, not on the inside. They are to be used, but they are not to control you.



You possess your possessions, or they possess you. Switchfoot.

What do you think that means?

How will you know if your possessions or the desire for them is controlling you?

If you set your heart on possession, you will miss out on the joy, the growth, the excitement and the blessing that faith brings.



According to God what is the definition of a pagan? v30

According to God what is the definition of a fool? v20

The passage ends with the famous verse:

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Luke 12:31



How did this compare with the actions of the Rich man?

How will you seek first his kingdom?



Test

"The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself,

'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

"Then he said,



Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Luke 12:33-34

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Read Luke 12:16-21

What is the first question you ask about this parable?

The first question you asked was probably "What did the man do wrong?" "What is wrong with bigger barns?" Surely what the man did was sensible business practice. It was economic sense. Surely he needed the bigger barns for the extra-large crop.

This is a puzzling story. It starts with a wealthy man, and at the end he dies. In the middle, he gets wealthier. The best harvest ever, so much he does not know what to do with it. So much that he has no room in his barns.



Faced with this problem, what is his plan?

What would you have done?



According to verse 19, what was his response to the abundant harvest?

What would your response have been?



His response was all about himself. The harvest was going to ensure an excellent future. All that he needed for retirement. He now had everything he needed. He was secure.

Hopefully your response would be different. Hopefully it included thanking God. Hopefully it included thinking about the best way to use this sudden wealth. Hopefully it included thinking about those in need. Hopefully you asked God what to do. If you did none of these things, please go back to the top of the page and restart the study.

Where did the abundant crops come from?

It is not so much the man's actions that were wrong as his attitude.



If he had said, "I will fill my barns and give the rest to those in need," would that have been wrong?

God calls this man a fool. When God calls you a fool, you are in trouble. The man managed to get life totally wrong. So wrong as to be a fool.



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Is this any different from the man in the story?

The story is not saying don't plan for the future or don't make good financial decisions. Jesus is trying to create a way of thinking, of seeing life, of living life. A world-view. One that was the opposite of the rich man in the story. It is quite hard to replicate this story for a modern setting, but the man's attitude is very contemporary; it is all around us.



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Context - Before

The story is deliberately simple, stripped of all but the basics. But the context is important.



Read 12:13-15

What did the man want Jesus to do?

How does Jesus respond?

Why did Jesus refuse to get involved?

This was the typical kind of thing a Rabbi would be asked; they had both moral and legal authority. The man may have had a good case; his brother may have been being unreasonable. But this is not what Jesus is interested in. The man picked the wrong Rabbi.



Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." Luke 12:15

Jesus clearly thinks the man is being greedy, asking for more than he is entitled to.



What kinds of greed are there?

What are the abundance of your possessions?

If life does not consist of this, what should it consist of?



Greed can be many things: the desire for possessions, power, control, money, selfishness, indulgence, accumulating experiences, attention, even popularity. It can show itself as possessiveness in relationships.



Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5

Jesus tells the parable as a response to this man's request and to illustrate this teaching.

So what did the rich man do wrong?

He was full of greed and focused only on his possessions. He was selfish. Controlled by his own plans. His goal in life was pleasure and rest. Keep it, not share it. Me not God. He was selfish. This bad thinking led to bad action.



If you pray "Jesus, please make me wealthy", what response are you likely to get?

Pro Tip: You could pray "give me today my daily bread", or you could just seek first His kingdom and see what else gets added. You could also pray for help with your career. As a rule of thumb, 'get rich slow' beats 'get rich fast'.



What does Jesus mean by "watch out" in verse 15?

How do you do this?

What does Jesus mean by "be on your guard" in verse 15?

How do you do this?

Both phrase require an active response from, that we examine ourselves, our thinking and our attitudes as well as our actions. We need to lookout for greed. Jesus implies here that greed is not obvious; it hides and needs to be guarded against.



The rich man's basic problem was materialism. His life is filled with what he has and what he wants to the exclusion of God. God was entirely left out of his thinking; God was left out of his planning. Even though the harvest was God's provision.



What is Materialism?

An overemphasis on physical things. A belief that possessions bring happiness. Both to the neglect of Spiritual things.

How will you know if materialism is a problem in your life?

For this man, bigger barns were his security, his idol.

The man dies that same night. He does not get to enjoy any of what he had planned.



"This is how it will be with those who store up things for themselves but are not rich toward God." Luke 12:21



What does Jesus mean by this?

Physical death or spiritual death?

What does it mean to be rich toward God?

How will you be rich towards God?

Money, love, prayer, worship, gratitude, obedience... etc.

Where should abundant harvest be stored? Luke 12:33-34

Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. Luke 17:33



Context – After

Read Luke 12:22-31



Did you notice the reference to harvest and barns in verse 24?

Why don't birds need barns?

What things does Jesus tell us not to worry about?



What attitude does Jesus want His disciples to have?

How does this contrast with that of the rich man?

How does verse 22 contrast with verse 19?

How does verse 25 contrast with verse 20?

They are exact opposites. Jesus says trust me, rely on me, live life well, use what you have well.

How much more valuable are you than birds?



Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Luke 12:25-26

Can you add an hour to your life?



We have already seen that materialism was the rich man's problem, but Jesus teaching after the parable suggests other issues.

The rich man had a:

Lack of faith

Lack of spirituality



How did these things show in his behaviour?

How do they show in our lives?