

Luke 12:1-34

This morning I want to talk to you about the urgency of the eternal and the vanity of the earthly: Eternal Urgency and Earthly Vanity.

1. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus is preaching a very sobering message on the seriousness of eternity
2. He is hitting on some issues that should cause everyone to be on the edge of their seat
3. Instead He is interrupted with a totally unrelated and entirely earthly request.
4. In grace and with truth he addresses the interruption (which is the bulk of our message) and sets us back on track in the end.

*Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.*

He had just very clearly revealed the leaven of the Pharisees

1. They were hypocrites, justifiers, legalists, and vicious!
2. Beware of their leaven...it will be revealed and made known.

*3 Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.*

Just like I have begun removing the mask off of the hypocritical Pharisees, we are about to open the door on who we are and what we are about.

1. You are about to go public!
2. So get your mind set NOT to fear man, but to fear God!

*4 ‘I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.*

*8 ‘And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; 9 but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him. 11 When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.’*

Do you hear the eternal urgency in Jesus' teaching here?

1. He is talking about matters that far outweigh any earthly matter here.
2. But in the midst of this eternally urgent teaching, Jesus is interrupted.

*13 Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.”*

Talk about an earthly distraction.

1. Jesus is in the middle of an eternally urgent sermon
2. And this guy just tunes Him out and announces what He really cares about to everyone.

Tell my brother to give me my money!

*14 But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?”*

Jesus is on his way to the cross. He is getting ready to unleash his disciples!

1. He has washed his hands as far as material things are concerned.
2. He has come to bring people to God, not to bring property to people.

But since you brought it up, I will say one thing to you.

*15 Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”*

### **Guard against greed**

1. Literally take heed, beware, guard yourselves
  - a. This is not a defensive move, but an offensive one.
  - b. This is taking positive action to ward off a foe: like building a high fence.
2. **Guard against all kinds of greed...** ALL covetousness.
  - a. Greed becomes so consuming that all of life becomes focused on the accumulation of wealth.
  - b. Someone once asked one of the Rockefeller's, "How much money is enough?" His answer: "Always a little bit more."
  - c. Greed becomes so consuming that all of life becomes focused on the accumulation of wealth.
  - d. There is no room for anything else, not even God unless he might help you gain more wealth.
3. He cannot wait for Jesus to stop talking about spiritual matters and eternity and get to the good stuff! Material things! His inheritance.

The reality is, **Even when we have an abundance, our life does not consist of our possessions.**

1. No amount of money or stuff can save your life!
  - a. Rich people die every day just like impoverished people
  - b. People with access to the best medical care, with the best insurance, and the biggest bank accounts still cannot preserve their lives one single day!!
  - c. Our life does not consist of our possessions.

2. No amount of money or stuff can guarantee abundant life
  - a. If I could just get this, that and the other I would be happy...for 5 minutes
  - b. Some of the most miserable people on earth are the richest...and some of the most joyful carefree on earth are the poorest.
  - c. Life isn't made up of possessions.
3. And no amount of money or material possessions can save your soul.

*16 And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive.*

1. This man was already rich at the beginning of the story.
2. It's not like all of a sudden, his ship came in. It's been in and getting bigger!

*17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.*

1. He could just sell it all and make some money. But if you flood the market, prices go down.
2. You need to keep the prices up, so what do you do?
  - a. You restrict supply by building bigger barns and storing the grain until it is in short supply.
  - b. Then you put it up for sale and multiply your gains still more.
3. By the way, he didn't just store his grain there, he stored his goods there as well.
  - a. This guy's got a lot of other stuff he's storing up.
  - b. He definitely isn't thinking of anyone else
  - c. My barns, my fruits, and my goods: In three verses he uses 6 I's and 5 my's.

*9 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” 20 But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ 9 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.”’*

1. All you have to do is control the spout at the bottom of the silo and let out only as much as you want and control the price and you are fixed.
2. You are set for life!
3. Take your ease. Your best life is now!
4. You have arrived!
  - a. Most of us long to be this guy.
  - b. We want this life...we hope that one day our ship comes in or our retirement investments to explode so that we can take our ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

This man that asked Jesus this question and is listening attentively to the story is drooling!

1. How he would love to be that man!
2. And then comes the surprise

*20 But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’*

Why would God call this man a fool?

**1. He thought his security was found in his bankbook**

- a. He assured himself that he had many years, but he was going to be dead before daybreak.
- b. *James 4:13-14 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes*

**2. He thought his success was found in his bankbook**

- a. Even as he was gloating over his fortune and his future looking again and again at his bankbook and balance sheet, the voice of God rang forth.
- b. God had been looking at the balance sheet that He was keeping of this man's life.
- c. He wrote across the whole thing one word—Bankrupt!

**3. He failed to see that security and success are found in eternal investments, not earthly earnings.**

*v21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God*

1. Who is the rich fool?
2. He is everyone who stores up treasure for himself AND is not rich towards God.

And NOW, look at how skillfully Jesus turns such a worldly discussion back to eternity.

*22 And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life’s span? 26 If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! 29 And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.*

*33 “Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Let us be rich towards God...lay up treasure in heaven, where it really matters.

**1. What should rise is not the Christian's standard of living, but his standard of giving.**

**2. Gain all you can...Save all you can...give all you can.** John Wesley.

- a. John Wesley was one of the wealthiest men in England...yet though he made as much as 1400 pounds a year, he lived on 28-30...the same as he lived on as a teacher.
- b. He was giving away 98% of his income and living on only 2%.
- c. When he died he left 6 pound notes, 6 silver spoons, a handful of books, a Geneva gown that he preached in all over England and uh one more thing....the Methodist church!
- d. He could have died as rich as a TV preacher...but he built orphanages, printed Bibles, sent missionaries, compiled the Methodist hymn book and he died worth about 30 dollars.

Matt 6:19-21 *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

**Conclusion:**

Let's think about this today. Who are you more like?

1. Are you more like the man who interrupted talk of eternity to discuss earthly possessions? Are you more like the rich fool?
2. Or are you eternally minded and eternally investing?
3. Who are you more like...honestly?

Here is what we need to ask ourselves today: Do we really believe?

1. That God exists, that eternity is forever, that hell is horrible and heaven is glorious and that this life is nothing more than a vapor?
2. Do we really believe this? If so, that should absolutely affect how we spend our
  - a. time
  - b. money
  - c. investments
  - d. careers
  - d. and our futures
3. Unfortunately **if the legitimacy of our beliefs were measured by our bankbooks we would be more like the rich fool than a follower of Jesus.** Practical atheists in "practical matters."

These things ought not to be: Do you believe in your heart? Confess Jesus as Lord. Call upon His name! Follow him...with your heart, your feet, your funds, and your futures.