

## AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: "Our Heart's Treasure" Luke 12

Scripture of Lesson: Luke's Gospel 12: 13-34

### 1. Parable of a foolish rich man

A. The lessons of this parable are as follows [v. 12: 15]:

1) Take heed and beware of covetousness.

- What is covetousness? Miriam Webster's Dictionary lists two definitions for "covetous." The first is "*having inordinate desire for wealth, or possessions, or another person's possessions.*" And the second definition is "*having a craving for possession.*"
- The key words are "*inordinate*" desire and "*craving.*" It is normal that we aspire to increase our personal wealth and work towards such a goal. We may achieve such goals with God's help. However, when our desire becomes excessive and becomes the primary goal of life so that achieving wealth and possession becomes a dominant pursuit of life, it becomes *covetousness* and a *craving for wealth*.
- God wants us to be careful so that the temptation of covetousness does not enter into our life as the top priority and affect the whole life like leaven. Lord Jesus, in this teaching, is teaching the disciples that covetousness is just as dangerous as the leaven of hypocrisy of the religious leaders.

2) A person's life does not consist in the abundance of his/her possessions.

- The two primary teachings of God to His people are first, love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, body and strength; secondly, love your neighbor as yourself. This man's plan did not include either of these goals that should be in every child of God.

B. What should have been in the rich man's plan?

1) The rich man's plan to rejoice in the increase of his wealth and to build additional storages to house his wares seems normal to a prosperous business person. What is wrong with having such a plan and the desire to feast and enjoy life? There are two things that are wrong with this man's plan:

First, there was no thanksgiving to God for the increase. God gave him the increase, but he took all credit to his own efforts.

*The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers. [Deuteronomy 30: 9]*

2) Secondly, He did not have God and the kingdom of God included in his future plan. He did not mention a plan to pay tithe, to share his increases with the poor and the needy so that the blessings from his God could be spread to his neighbors. There was no plan to honor and love God nor to love his neighbors using the blessings that could have come only through the kindness of God.

### 2. Solomon vs Lilies

A. Lord Jesus taught two very important lessons that define our life and determine our happiness.

1) "*Life is more than food and the body more than clothing.*" [v. 12: 23] This is God's vision of human life – what it should be. At the same time, this verse points to us where most people place their priority in life – that is, in what to eat, where to live and what dresses to wear.

2) "*And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.*" [v. 12: 29] This is a strong injunction – "do NOT seek." The word *seek [zeiteite]* means to "search for; look for." Why is it that we need not be anxious about our life's needs? Lord Jesus provides the answer in verse 12: 30 – "*your Father knows that you need these things.*" A child in a family knows that he/she does not need to be worried and be searching for food to eat and clothing to

wear if he/she is confident that the parents know his/her needs and provides them. Likewise, God wants us to trust in His provision and not be concerned about our needs. God is offended when we do not trust in His care for His children.

- B. In emphasizing these lessons, Lord Jesus compared the glory of king Solomon and the glory of wild lilies that grow in the fields, as viewed before God, not from a human point of view. From the common worldly viewpoint, the comparison of these two drastically different levels of wealth is not even worth considering. Solomon had a great wealth, more like the wealth of Bill Gates today. How can his value be compared to the value of a wild lily? But, Lord Jesus was not comparing the monetary or materialistic values of Solomon and a lily. Rather He was comparing their value (glory) from God's viewpoint. In fact, He was presenting a stark picture of how even a renowned king such as Solomon, who built a magnificent temple of God in Jerusalem, could lose most all of his praise and honor when he stands before God because of his covetousness, sexual wantonness, and unfaithfulness to God through much idol worship. God regards Solomon's honor as less than that of wild lilies in the fields or of birds in the air.
- C. Here, the case of Solomon is used by Lord Jesus as a bad example to avoid, rather than a praiseworthy example to emulate. A wild lily, instead, is used as an example to follow—though a very insignificant wild plant, a lily is faithful in living out and demonstrating the true beauty that God has instilled in its tiny seed.
- D. How then should we live? In verse 31 Lord Jesus teaches "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you." How do we seek the kingdom of God so that all of our life's necessities are given to us by God? Again, love the LORD God with all your heart, soul, body and strength and love your neighbor as yourself! Then, there is the Lord's promise that our needs will be provided for us. He does not promise to make us rich and famous, but we will have sufficient things that meet our needs. Paul wrote, "*Godliness with contentment is great gain [1 Timothy 6:6].*"
- E. Now, the final lesson of Lord Jesus in these passages is in verse 12: 34 – "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" What are our treasures? What are the most important pursuits of our life? What do we value most above all else in our life? Let us look into our hearts and souls to find our heart's treasures and avoid the foolishness of the rich man and Solomon by filling it with true heavenly treasures. Let us make good use of the Lord's teaching, possess Jesus Christ and His kingdom in our heart and soul, and trust in God's provisions with full contentment.

*Discussion topics:*

1. *What is the greatest treasure of my heart and soul?*
2. *Do you think that Jesus' teaching on wealth and material possession is too harsh? Please assess your view on the basis of today's lesson.*