

disciples aside and said to them, {18} “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death {19} and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!” It was not for His sins that Jesus was sentenced to die, but for yours and mine. Through Jesus’ atoning sacrifice, we have received grace upon grace.

Now we are to go and do likewise. In so doing, we enrich the lives of others. Paul says in Ephesians 4:32; **“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”** (Col 3:13 NIV) **“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”** (1 Pet 1:22 NIV) **“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.”**

For the sake of earthly gain the rich fool had forfeited his life. Let us not make the same mistakes, but let us learn from his mistake. Let us enrich the lives of others by letting Christ’s love shine in and through us.

O Lord, heavenly Father, we remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Rejoicing in His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own high priest. Gather us together from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

THE LAMPLIGHTER



THEME: Jesus Spoke to Them in Parables – “Enjoying the Good Life”

And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. {17} He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ {18} “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. {19} 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.”” {20} “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?’ {21} “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:16-21 NIV)

APRIL 2010

*A Publication of The Lutheran Service Auxiliary
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Dear Friends of Jesus,

In the verses prior to our parable, a man from the crowd gathered around Jesus demanded that Jesus should settle a dispute between he and his brother concerning their inheritance. Such a request opened the door for Jesus to address a more pressing matter that far out weighs one's inheritance. After refusing to be placed in the middle of a family conflict, he says these most important words: ***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."***(Luke 12:15)

Many Americans today look for and desire the opportunity to "Enjoy the Good Life." What determines whether or not one is enjoying the good life? Is it a large enough bank account so that we need not worry about our financial concerns? Is it a garage full of enough toys to fill the emptiness of all our spare time? Is it a cupboard full of food so that we need not wonder about our next meal? Is it the chance to jet around the world to see all its wonders? Is it the lifestyle of the rich and famous? For many these become the very things that define the American dream of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

This greed was the underlying problem for the rich fool in our text, for he was only interested in **ENRICHING HIS OWN LIFE**. He had no heart for God. He possessed no compassion for his neighbor. He was the center of his universe. His language demonstrates his self indulgence: "What shall I do? I have no place to store MY crops." – "I will tear down MY barns...I will store MY grain and MY goods... I'll say to MYSELF...." Tragically the possessive pronoun "my" shows up repeatedly throughout his deliberation with himself. He is alone when he makes his

decision, and he will be alone when he consumes God's gifts.

Bob Russell told a story about a rich man who was determined to take his wealth with him. He told his wife to get all his money together, put it in a sack, and then hang the sack from the rafters in the attic. He said, "When my spirit is caught up to heaven, I'll grab the sack on my way." Well he eventually died, and the woman raced to the attic, only to find the money still there. She said, "I knew I should've put the sack in the basement."

Jesus does not say that possessing riches and goods is wrong, but he does warn against becoming all consumed by them. (Mat 19:23-24 NIV) ***Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. {24} Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*** Our sinful human tendency is to come and rely solely upon our wealth and not on God who is able to save men from their sins. We begin to think like the rich fool and forget that it is God who is the giver of all good and perfect gift as James states: (James 1:16-17 NIV) ***"Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. {17} Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."*** All we own is really on loan from God.

The good life is not found in all our stuff, but is found in **ENRICHING THE LIVES OF OTHERS**. Jesus enriched our lives by giving His life on the cross on Calvary's Hill outside Jerusalem. It was for our benefit that Jesus endured its agony. (Mat 20:17-19 NIV) ***Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve***