

Living A Generous Life (Luke 12:13-22)

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Living A Generous Life

Generosity is an Attitude, not an Amount.
We need God to transform our attitudes in particular three areas:

- 1 Things
- 2 Others
- 3 The Self

Parable of the Foolish Farmer

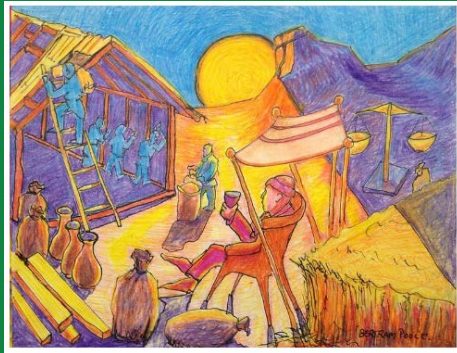
A story prompted by a question about inheritance money.

Jesus warns about greed and reminds them that "one's life is not made up of many possessions" (Luke 12:15), and then he tells a story.

Parable of the Foolish Farmer

A rich farmer enjoyed a large bumper crop, and decided to build larger barns, so that he can enjoy the easy life.

God calls the man a fool and that very night requires his life from him.



Parable of the Foolish Farmer

This story is a reflection on Ecclesiastes.

- The Foolish Farmer: "Take life easy; 'eat, drink and be merry'" (Luke 12:19); quoting Ecclesiastes, but with no recognition that life is a gift from God (Eccl 8:15).
- God: "'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' (Luke 12:20); reflecting Ecclesiastes 2:18-19.

Parable of the Foolish Farmer

At the end of the story Jesus addresses the crowd: "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

And addresses his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes" (Luke 12:22-23).

1 Things

If our attitude towards things is that God has generously given us everything, then generosity will be our way of living.

- All things ultimately belong to God in creation.
- God has reasserted his claim on all creation when he sent his Son to redeem "all things" (Col 1:20).

1 Things

The Rich Farmer thought what he had was his and he wanted to preserve it and enjoy the good life.

- Everything is about his stuff: “my crops” ... “my barns” ... “my surplus grain.”
- The problem with focusing on trying to preserve things, is that you will never have enough.

2 Others

If our attitude toward others is that they may be the intended beneficiaries of God’s generous gifts, then generosity will be our way of living.

- The Foolish Farmer did not think of others.

3 The Self

Our attitude towards the self ultimately determines our posture to God, others, and things, and needs to be transformed so that generosity will be our way of living.

- The Foolish Farmer was rich in terms of “having” rather than rich in terms of “being.”

3 The Self

“You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich” (2 Cor 8:9).

- What does “rich” mean in this passage?

3 The Self

“If we are indwelled by the Christ who became poor so that we can become rich, we will be rich. No matter how little we have, we will be ‘more than enough’ people.... If the presence of the gift-giving Christ makes us rich, rest will replace weariness, and peace will banish unending restlessness” (Miroslav Wolf, *Free of Charge*, 109).

3 The Self

A rich self will have transformed attitudes toward the past, the present, and the future.

- Surveys the past with *gratitude*.
- Lives in the present with *contentment*.
- Looks to the future with *trust*.

The Foolish Farmer

The parable underscores that need for a radical readjustment of our attitudes in light of the kingdom of God.

The Foolish Farmer

Christ followers are generous “because they are loyal to a different king and citizens of the new kingdom inaugurated by Jesus. That citizenship loosens the bonds of this world and gives them the freedom to travel light when it comes to possessions. Unlike most of the rest of humanity, Jesus’ followers are growing in their trust that ultimate security and freedom are gifts from a loving God and not products of stockpiling assets..... This parable generates changed behaviour regarding possessions, but it does so not primarily by giving us a good example to imitate or a bad one to avoid. Instead, it changes our behaviour first by changing our vision” (Long, *Proclaiming the Parables*, 284).

Conclusions

Our God is a generous gift-giving God who wants to shape us into his image to be a gift-giving people who are generous with our time, talents, and treasures.