

The Risk of Financial Security

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[0 : 00] Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 12. We have seen since the end of Luke, chapter 9, Jesus has set his face toward Jerusalem.

It is a new phase of his ministry. He has preached through the areas of Galilee. Now he is preaching through all the areas from Galilee south, making his way toward Jerusalem. And as he has set his face toward Jerusalem, it's a sobering time, and it's a time where his messages, I think, seem to level up a bit in seriousness.

Souls are at stake. I think Jesus is very mindful that he's heading toward the cross, and he's going to lay down his life for others. And on his way, he's going to compel people by whatever means to face what life is really about.

And so he confronts an issue today that we face today very, very vigorously in our culture. And that is possessions, financial security, eternal, not eternal, but economic security.

[1 : 23] We worry about do we have enough, you know, especially those who are aging. And you're, will I be okay in the future?

Those are genuine, very genuine worries and concerns. So Jesus addresses that for us today. So look with me at Luke chapter 12. We're going to read from verses 13 through 34 as we enter into what he tells us.

So if you're able, please stand as I read from Luke chapter 12, beginning of verse 13. Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

But he said to him, He thought to himself, what shall I do?

For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I will do this. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and all my goods.

[2 : 51] And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax. Relax. Eat. Drink.

Be merry. But God said to him, Fool, this night your soul is required of you.

And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

And he said to his disciples, Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.

For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouse nor barn.

[3 : 56] Yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life?

If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow.

They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today and tomorrow, is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you?

O you of little faith. And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things.

And your father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

[5 : 05] Fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also. So it reads. Let's pray. Father, cause your name to be set apart.

Cause your kingdom to come to open our eyes, to move in our hearts, to arrest our soul. Cause your will to be done.

Fill us with the knowledge of your will in these moments. Give us what we need today. Give us the bread that we need, that will feed us, that will bring us fulfillment and satisfaction.

Give us your word, oh God. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.

[6 : 25] We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. As you well know, our American culture is materialistic.

It is consumer driven. Advertisers goad us to want more. Seek to persuade us that we need more. And they promise in these better things that they offer, we will find bliss, fulfillment, joy.

They appeal to our natural proneness to think that we do need more. That we tend to think that more will make us better.

Or make our life better. To make us think that life consists of things. And that's it.

But all this only breeds discontent as we find, as we chase those things, and we gather those things. They start to wear out, and they rust, and the moths destroy, or thieves steal.

[7 : 47] Some of us experience that, take away what we have. To show us that these things do not last. They just breed discontent. The great danger Jesus addresses is in coveting more.

Wanting more. Never is enough. To put our trust in things. To put our hope in a future of financial or economic security.

And all of that, as Jesus addresses, ignores trust in our Father, who provides what we need.

Focuses not on heaven, but focuses on earth.

And so that's what we're looking at today. Jesus shows us the great risk of seeking financial security, or seeking security and treasures on earth, rather than heaven.

So it raises several questions, doesn't it? What about inheritances? What about future savings?

What about retirement? Lots of questions come up with this text.

[9 : 02] And I'm not going to answer, try to answer all of them. But hope to walk through what Jesus says and let those words apply to us.

It starts, interestingly, Jesus is teaching, and suddenly someone in the crowd, verse 13, interrupts.

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

It's actually in the imperative. So he's commanding or demanding that Jesus step in and make a decision to tell his brother to divide his inheritance.

So it starts with, you know, this whole issue of inheritance. And isn't it interesting? Anybody dealt with wills and inheritances and stuff like that? Isn't it interesting what comes out in those kind of things?

You see a different side of people sometimes. Hopefully you don't, you know? Hopefully the family's like, no, no, no, no. Sometimes those things come out.

[10 : 01] But inheritance issues often bring out coveting. And it's interesting that Jesus is asked about this, this inheritance, you know?

And this person, it feels entitled to it. He feels like his older brother perhaps is not being fair, whatever it is. He wants, and Jesus, and I think by his turning to teach about covetousness, interprets this man's wanting of his inheritance as an issue of coveting.

Wanting that more. Depending on that. Hoping in that. So it's interesting too that Jesus' response in verse 14, you know, he says to him, man, who made me judge or arbiter over you?

It's quite a strong response of Jesus. Like, not my business. You know, he just kind of, he refuses to be drawn into it.

It's not what he's about. It's interesting what Jesus is drawn into and what he's not drawn into. Here he's just outright, outright, no, I'm not dealing with this. And instead turns it into a teaching on covetousness and the thinkings about, as he tells this parable of this rich man who wants to have enough so that he can just retire.

[11 : 22] He can just kind of have this security. And now he's got enough. Now he can just enjoy life. Living for that. How many people, you know, think of that? We think, we plan to retire. One day we're going to retire and then I'll just do what I want to do.

Then I'll take the trips and then I'll, you know, do the stuff, whatever, be happy. And often by the time you're able to retire, you're too old to do anything and you, you know, you don't feel well enough or it just doesn't pan out, just not what you think.

Isn't it interesting? But we put our hopes in that. And that's natural, natural. And that was natural then. So let's look at what Jesus does.

His teaching concerning future security. And it comes in two different parts. And I believe they're connected. And the first one, he's dealing with this issue of covetousness. So he talks about guarding against covetousness.

Tells the parable, ends it by saying in verse 21, there's, there's, here's a person who lays up treasure for himself. He's only about himself and is not rich toward God.

[12:27] So guarding against covetousness is one fight. And then he turns in verse 22 and addresses his disciples. And he makes a connection.

Notice when, in verse 22, he says, I, he said to his disciples, what? What's the first word he says? Therefore. So in other words, what he's going to tell them connects to what he's just said to the crowd.

So he's just talked about covetousness. Well, there's another form of covetousness called worry. Covetousness is about wanting more. Worry is about, will I have enough?

So just a different form of it. So we're going to look at two battles Jesus describes here. He gives two directives. About covetousness, he says, fight covetousness, right?

By being rich toward God. And secondly, in verses 22 and following, he talks to the disciples about fighting anxiety and fighting anxiety by seeking the kingdom.

[13:32] He says, instead of worry, instead seek his kingdom. So I say, okay, what's that? What's that mean? How does that conquer worry? How does that fight anxiety? All right, so let's look at these two in order.

So verse 15, he begins his directive. He says to them, take care and be on your guard against all covetousness.

For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. So his first directive would just simply be this, fight against covetousness. How?

By being rich toward God, which is his conclusion. He talks about this man who only lays up treasure for himself instead of being rich toward God. So what does that mean?

So fight covetousness by being rich toward God. So turn your covetous desire for more to be desire for more of God. Instead of more desire for earthly things, desire for possessions, it's desire for God, hunger for God.

[14:38] John Piper wrote a wonderful book a long, long time ago. It's come out many, many times called Desiring God. And he talks about Christian hedonism.

Hedonism being the desire for pleasure. And he talks about finding that we aim too low. If we look for earthly pleasure in things of this world, we aim way too low. We're cheating ourselves.

The only desire and pleasure that is fulfilling is in God. So lift your, so Christian hedonism, finding pleasure in God, seeking God will find your fulfillment.

Fascinating. And I think that's exactly what Jesus is talking about here, being rich toward God. So let's walk through. What's the peril? There's a strong warning here. He talks about guarding against covetousness.

Covetousness meaning to, you know, that's the 10th command, right? Do not covet. Covet the things other people have. Their wife, their house, their possessions, their donkey, their car, their whatever.

[15:43] Their retirement plan, their security, whatever it might be, it changes for us, doesn't over life. Guard against all kinds of covetousness. Why?

Verse 15, second part. For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. Life's not about things, even though we can fall into that thinking it is about things.

That's what advertisers tell us. That's what neighbors have. That's what we tend to think. Oh, if I just had that, I'd feel better. We just improved our house this way, it'd be better.

Well, it might, but is that life? Life's not about that. You miss life. If you make it about possessions and things, you will miss life. And there's two words in his directive.

He says, verse 15, take care and be on guard. The first word, be aware. He says, it's translated take care, but it's stronger than that.

[16 : 44] Be aware. Be perceptive. Recognize covetousness. Recognize it. Recognize all forms of it. There's different kinds of it. Sometimes it's subtle.

And when you recognize it, then guard against it. Avoid it. Fight it. Because covetousness can ruin your life. No wonder it's the 10th command.

And if all, if you think you fulfill all the other nine great commands, right? How you work toward God and you don't steal, you don't commit adultery, you haven't killed anybody, right?

You haven't lied. How about coveting? You ever coveted? Well, yeah, that should nail all of us. When you see it, flee it.

Avoid all forms of it. So he tells a parable to illustrate this. Verse 16 through 19 tells this parable. Talks about a rich man. Well, he talks about the land of a rich man produced plentifully.

[17 : 46] Interesting, not the rich man produced, but the land produced. So he just happened to have good land. And he thought to himself, what shall I do?

For I have nowhere to store my crops. That's a good question. What do I do with my surplus? It's produced so plentifully that he doesn't have enough room to store it all. What shall he do with it?

That's a good question. What do I do with my surplus? When I have years of plenty, when there's been, God is blessed, what do I do with it? That's a good question. Pragmatic question.

Here's the solution. Verse 18, he says, I'll do this. I'll tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. Well, is there anything wrong with that?

Sounds prudent, doesn't it? Sounds reasonable? Builds barns. Okay, that's not a problem. Problem comes in verse 19. And I will say to my soul, because here's the goal of all of it.

[18 : 41] Here's what he really wants. Nothing wrong with building larger barns. Nothing wrong with doing business and producing. But what do you do with it? And I will say to my soul, soul, isn't it interesting?

He talks to his soul. Because the soul is the issue here. Not the heart, which is in Scripture the mind.

It's the soul is the issue. The soul wants. I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods. You've finally got enough. You've got ample goods laid up for you for many years.

So take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry. Sounds like retirement, doesn't it? I got it made. I'm going to cruise now. Anything wrong with that?

Hmm. Well, the problem is the focus is on himself. The problem is not that he stored up things and he has ample goods.

[19 : 45] The problem is he wants to live a life of self-indulgence. Or shall we say soul indulgence. There's no thought of others and more tragically there's no thought of God in relation to all these supplies that he has.

So the point comes in verse 20. Right? But God said, so I said, so the man said, oh, I got it made. God said, fool. Who's a fool?

Fool's the one that says there's no God. The fool is the one who lives like there is no God. Doesn't care. Right? Fool. Fool. This night.

You haven't even got to the fulfillment yet. You haven't got to drink or eat and be merry. You made the plan and this very night your soul is required of you. Talk about your soul. Your soul's mine now, God says.

And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? Whose will they be? Sounds like a question from Ecclesiastes, isn't it? And then, so Jesus makes the point. So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

[20 : 56] What's the whole point of this guard against secure, covetousness? Why is covetousness so bad? Wanting more? Well, it's a natural thing. We're prone to it.

It's why they make, why God makes a commandment about it. Because that's what we will do if God doesn't say, here's the line. Don't do this. Guard yourself. Why is it so bad?

Well, because covetousness is the problem of our soul. Our soul wants what it wants. Our soul wants it easy. Our soul wants fulfillment now.

Now, do an interesting study of the soul in the Psalms. You'll see both extremes. The soul will be the part of David that my soul thirsts for God, right? My soul longs for God.

My soul, so the soul's not all bad. The soul can be this affection, this wonderful affection for God. On the other hand, my soul can be cast down.

[21 : 55] My soul can be depressed. I mean, my soul's my affections. It can just go all over. Are you a soulish? Everybody's got a soul.

How much are driven by our soul? Remember, Jesus says, hate your soul in this world so that you might save your soul. Do not listen to your soul in this world because your soul will always want more, easier, better, relief, no pain.

That's what your soul wants. Of course, it's natural. So, don't listen to your soul, talk to your soul. Not like this man, but like David did.

David said, what, why are you disturbed, oh my soul? Questions his soul, talks to his soul. Put your hope in God, trust in God. That's Psalm 42.

Put your trust in God, hope in God, soul. Stop hoping in things. What is being rich toward God?

[23 : 06] That's interesting. He's, he finds, verse 21, he lays up treasure for himself. It's all about himself and is not rich toward God. What does it mean to be rich toward God?

How can I have abounding things toward God? How can I be affluent, rich, wealthy in regard to God? How do I do that?

What does that look like? That sounds strange. Well, let's look at what, how, Paul talks with Timothy about it in 1 Timothy 6.

How can I be rich toward God? What does it look like? 1 Timothy 6 describes, Paul's telling Timothy, he's training Timothy, a young man, where to set his hopes. He talks about godliness. Godliness with contentment is great gain. For, why? Why should I seek contentment? For we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world.

[24 : 08] But if we have food and clothing with these, we will be content. I have enough.

Contentment is a settled disposition that I'm okay, I have enough.

In other words, it's the opposite of covetousness. covetousness. He goes on, he says, those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving for more that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang.

There's the peril. See, what can love of money, what can covetousness, what can that craving for just having more? I don't have enough. I need more. What does that do? Well, it can plunge me into ruin and destruction and it can cause some to wander from the faith because my faith comes in things instead of in the Lord.

So, what's the antidote to that? Paul says to Timothy, but as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Flee the desire to be rich.

[25 : 25] Flee the love of money. Flee covetousness. What? And do what? How do I, what do I put in its place? Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

Be rich toward God because you pursue the things of God. You pursue the things of God. Pursue the things God calls you to. Godliness. Godliness just means that I'm constantly aware of God.

It's an orientation of my life. Ungodliness means I don't think of God at all. That's the fool.

Godliness. I'm walking with God.

Right? Faith, love, covet only God's riches. So, let's turn this around. Let's talk about this desiring God, right? This, this, this hunger for God, this finding pleasure in God is to covet godly riches.

Desire more of righteousness, faith, and love. Crave for more of God. Remember how Jesus said it? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.

[26 : 39] They'll find fulfillment because they seek God's righteousness. So, let me ask the other practical question because here's the question we have, we think about, I think about.

Is it wrong to plan and save for the future? Right? Is that wrong? I would say this. I think not at all. I think the Bible even teaches those kind of things to be careful.

But the issue is check your heart and your motives. What are you saving for? What are you saving for? If it's like this rich man and the goal is just, it's going to be so I can have enjoyment in life.

If that's your goal, then no. It's not safe to do that. That's a great risk. That's a great risk because you may end up wandering from the faith altogether.

Is it for self-indulgence? Ask the question, what do I do with my surplus? Is it okay to save? Yeah, the Bible talks about parents need to be able to take care of their children. Right?

[27 : 44] And then later, children need to take care of their parents at some point. Right? So we don't get rid of everything. If we do that, we can't take care of our family. We have the family to take

care of.

If you're Paul and you're not married and you're on your own, fine. If you're Jesus, you have nothing. Right? But most of his disciples, as Paul said, most of his disciples had wives and families. And so they needed to earn. They needed to have provision. So ask the question, what do I do with my surplus? If God has blessed me so that I'm able to save, what do I do with it?

Is it all just for me? Right? Or do I plan to give some of that away? Do I plan to divide that? Do I plan to share that? Have I talked to Jesus about that? That's the biggest question.

Lord, how shall I do this? Direct me how to give, how to share, how to save. I think that's the safest way, isn't it?

[28 : 46] So the first fight is fight against covetousness by being rich toward God. Second fight is to fight against anxiety. Several times Jesus says to his disciples, don't worry, don't be anxious.

But he changes the directive then in verse 31 where he says, instead of worrying, right, seek his kingdom. And all these things will be added to you.

Seek his kingdom. And then he adds some things about what that looks like. So fight anxiety. Fight against anxiety. If you worry about having enough. See, this is different than covenant.

Covenant says, I want more. The other side, now look in verse 22, it says he turns to his disciples. Now he's going to train the disciples who've already committed their lives to walk and follow Jesus. Okay, they're not after a life of covetousness and getting rich on earth. So what do they struggle with? Well, they're going to struggle with, do I have enough? Can I make it?

[29 : 49] Right? So he's going to say, okay, fight against that anxiety. That's natural by seeking God's heavenly kingdom. Okay, so we want to unpack that a little bit.

But notice there's three ways here. In the first part, verse 22 to 26, it's about the soul. Be rich in soul. Let me explain that. He says in verse 22, to his disciples, therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life.

Better translation, and the correct translation is, do not be anxious about your soul. Jesus uses the word soul. Why? Because he's picking up the word soul back from verse 19 and 20 where the man, the rich man was saying, to his soul.

Right? And Jesus, and then, excuse me, verse 20, God said, your soul. So Jesus picks up that word in verse 22 and says, don't be anxious about your soul. Why do they translate life?

Well, because this word, *suche*, can mean life sometimes generically. But Jesus used a whole different word for life back in verse 15 when he's talking about covetousness.

[30 : 58] He says, for one's life, there, it's *zoe*. Like we get the word *zoo*. Right? *Zoe*, your life, your physical life. For one's life does not consist in the abundance of riches.

Now, in verse 22, he's using a different word. For your soul doesn't. Your soul's more than that. He's going to talk about just a different nuance. Be rich in soul.

Don't be anxious about your soul. Your soul is more than a focus on earthly things. And then he talks about, let's talk, let's think about the ravens. Isn't that interesting? Consider the ravens.

So, in addressing the crowds, he tells a parable. Remember, he does parables with crowds, doesn't he? Why does he do parables with crowds? Yeah, to hide the truth, right? It's only those who ask him who are going to get the understanding of the parable.

So, now he's talking to his disciples. He's going to give some very simple lessons here. Ravens and lilies. Consider the ravens. What are ravens? Well, it could also be called crow, scavenger bird.

[32 : 06] These are unclean birds. So, it's interesting, Jesus, you know, before in the last section, Jesus talked about the sparrow, right? The sparrow. Sparrow's clean. Sparrow's okay. That's what the poor people bought in the market, sparrow.

Now he's going to talk about ravens. Why? Because he's going to go to the extreme end. Why would God care about ravens? They're unclean and they're dirty and they're scavengers. And Jews are to have nothing to do with them.

But he says, consider those crows. Consider those ravens. All right, what do they do? Verse 24, they don't sow or reap. They don't have storehouse or barn, yet God feeds them.

God takes care of them. They don't have to work. They don't have to do all. God takes care of them. They do have to come out early and look for the worm. It's not like God just brings the worms to them.

They do have to work. They do have to do what they do, but they don't have to work hard. They just come out in the morning when they do. And I watched this at Estes. I bird watched at Estes, you

know, because there's lots of more birds there.

[33 : 08] And yeah, early they come out and they're picking at the ground and looking and everyone says, oh, they got one. Jesus says, well, that's God feeding them.

God's taking care of them. There will be provision for them. Connection, comparison, how much more value are you than the birds? So he's going to ask three questions.

The end of verse 24, the first question is, if God feeds the ravens who are unclean, how much more will he not take care of you? And then he asks another question.

Verse, where am I? Verse 25, 25, thank you. Second question, which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to a span of life? And technically, he said, who can add a cubit to your life?

So in other words, you know, cubit is from the elbow to the about 18 inches. Who can add that much? I wish I could add that much. I'd be tall. I could really look. But worrying, will that add anything to your life?

[34 : 06] Obviously, no, it can't add anything to your life. Why do it? It's useless. Don't worry. So he's just using reasonable questions.

Obviously, that doesn't solve it. He's just saying here, it's not reasonable to worry. God takes care of the, and then finally, verse 26, a third question, if then you're not able to do such a small thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?

So again, another question. If worrying doesn't help you, why are you doing it? So then he comes to a second picture.

Okay, he's talked about food. God, God will take care of the food that you need. Now he's going to talk about clothes. So different picture, lilies, verse 27.

Consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. Yet, I tell you, by comparison, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Solomon in all his glory, I mean, he had all, he had the best of the best of the best.

[35 : 09] He had ships going out bringing in gold. He had ships going out bringing in ivory. He had ships going out bringing in all kinds of spices and all kinds of animals and, you know, he had it all.

Remember the picture of his throne, you know, the steps up and then the 12 lions around the throne and the, I mean, it was magnificent. Even the queen of Sheba came and said, oh, I haven't even been told the half of it.

The glory of Solomon. And yet, he's saying, the lilies of the field better than Solomon. Ever driven through, I remember, the first time we drove, Dylan and I drove to Colorado, we were coming out to, I remember what we were coming out to do.

We were coming out to the four wheel or something, I don't know. But on the way out, we saw the, you know, we're going along the mountainside and there's this, there's all these Columbine. Just gorgeous out there.

And I, I remember thinking every time I drive somewhere and I want, and I'm driving out where, you know, it's just, just kind of open land, you know, it's just kind of, it's pretty, it's beautiful. Never seems like they have to weed out there, you know.

[36 : 17] But then, when you, when you have your own garden, it's like, how do I keep it? Look, it looks terrible. And yet out there where it's just kind of where God takes care of, it's always gorgeous and beautiful and how's he do it?

It's, you know, it's just God a race. He's a much better gardener. And by the way, he never plants things in rows. He doesn't, Diane knows that, right?

God doesn't, he doesn't do the whole row and then the hedges and the, he just, anyway. So consider the lilies, right?

So if he clothes them, verse 28, if he clothes the grass, which is expendable, the grass, which is alive today and burned tomorrow, if he clothes the grass, how much more will he clothe you?

Now he turns it into an issue of faith. Oh, you have little faith. So first, it's about your soul. Your soul's more than a focus on the earthly. Now he makes it about faith.

[37 : 22] You have little faith. If he clothes the grass, how much more will he clothe you? Have you thought about that? When you worry, have you thought about that?

So Jesus is calling us to think about this. God has designed the world so that we have pictures of faith. We have pictures of how God takes care of the animals, how he takes care of the grass.

How much more will he take care of you? So when you look at that beautiful, if you bird watch, we were with the Wilsons last night, we were talking about bird watching. If you bird watch, learn from

the birds.

Don't just think about how they're doing, just think about, oh, how God made them so different and takes care of them and then you think of the flowers and the fields and how God takes care of that. That relates to us. Jesus says it relates to us. It's a lesson for us. Rich in faith. So it's an issue of faith and then verse 29, he says, don't seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink.

[38 : 28] Don't make that your ambition. Don't make that your end of life. Don't make that what life's all about. For the nations of the world, seek after these things. That's what everybody does.

Don't be like everybody. Don't make life all about just those things. Yes, we need food and clothing but the point is God will take care of you.

Do what you're called to do. Do your job. Do your regular job. Like the bird, you do the, you know, go out and do your work but don't worry about it. God will provide. There will be times of richness and there will be times of, what's the difference?

Poorness. Poverty or barrenness, right? There's times of plenty and there's times of famine. We know. There's seasons. God takes us through seasons and we have seasons financially as well. We have seasons work ways as well. Gosh, in our culture, we've seen a gamut of things lately. So, so don't make it all about that.

[39 : 35] Obviously, that comes and goes and then he adds at the end of verse 30, look, the nations seek after all these things and what about you? You have a father and your father knows that you need them.

That's a faith issue. Faith issue. You trust your father to provide for you. So, notice he's made it more personal. He talks about how God feeds the raven, God clothes the lilies, but your father, your father takes care of you.

Your father takes care of you. And then, and then he turns to, here's the antidote. Here's the directive. Verse 31, instead, instead of worry, how do you overcome worry?

Instead of worry, verse 31, seek his kingdom and all these things will be added to you. It's almost just like it's presented in Matthew 6, but the wording's just a little different, isn't it?

In Matthew, it's seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you, right? And in Matthew 6, he talks about some of these other pictures in nature. And here he says, seek his kingdom.

[40 : 49] What's that mean? I read, I forget if I have six or seven commentaries on Luke, but I read them. Not one of them had anything to say about that. And when I read it, it's like, that's my question.

What does that mean, seek his kingdom? It's like they just assume you know what that means. It's like getting a study Bible, you know? You get the study Bible and it has the notes in it and the one question you have when you come to it, you go to the study, they don't say anything about that. They talk about all this other stuff that you can figure out for yourself, but they don't know and answer the hard questions. What's kingdom? Well, if we've been good readers in Luke, we've heard about the kingdom quite a bit.

What's his kingdom? We even focused, I'm not guiltting you here or shaming you, because I had to go and review my notes too. Because we think of kingdom, what's kingdom?

And as I shared before, when we looked at, when we pray, thy kingdom come, right? So we took a week and just looked at that one prayer. What does that mean to pray thy kingdom?

[41 : 59] And I talked about the system that I was raised in, talked about how that kingdom is all future. future. And yet, that's not what I find in scripture at all.

Especially with Jesus and particularly with Paul. Is there a kingdom future? Absolutely. There's a culmination of the kingdom that's future. But theologians like to talk about the kingdom as already and not yet.

There's an already part of it that we experience and that we should seek. If it's all future, how do I seek it? Unless I just kind of make it generically about heavenly things.

Which is part of it. Matthew calls it, you know, the kingdom of heaven. Luke calls it the kingdom of God. Jesus probably expressed it both ways.

So what's the kingdom? Well, we learned that the kingdom was something that Jesus preached. He preached the gospel of the kingdom. And it says it over and over in Luke.

[42 : 59] He went to another city and preached the gospel of the kingdom. The good news of the kingdom. He's focusing on the good news of the kingdom. Then when he sends his disciples out,

what does he tell them to preach?

Preach the gospel of the kingdom. When in Acts, when the apostles are preaching, what do they preach? The gospel of the kingdom. Paul all the way at the end of Acts 27, 28 is still teaching and persuading about the kingdom.

The gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom is related to the gospel. So how so? We saw in Luke, we saw that the kingdom has parables, right?

Has secrets. And so only to the disciples of Jesus are revealed the secrets of the kingdom. In other words, new insights to the kingdom. The parable of the sower.

Only those who ask Jesus what that means understand that it's more than a gardening lesson.

They get, oh, there's deeper stuff here and that's kingdom stuff.

[44 : 00] That's kingdom stuff about how the word comes to me. The word is sown and what are the dangers? You know, that's kingdom stuff. That's not future. That's right now. Jesus talks about his mission was to, right, the spirit of the Lord is upon me and he has sent me to what?

to proclaim rescue to the captives. Rescue to the captives.

How does he rescue the captives? When Jesus casts out a demon, what did he say? The kingdom has come. Not gone.

When I cast out a demon, when I cast out the devil, the kingdom has come. Why? Because the king of the kingdom has arrived and he's taken the other king and kicking him off his throne.

That's the kingdom. Every time he saves a soul, the kingdom is taking from Satan's kingdom. You understand that?

[45 : 03] The kingdom is about not just the preaching of the gospel. It's about the preaching of the gospel because what Jesus does in the cross is he delivers captives from the domain of Satan.

That's Colossians 1, 13 and 14. Rescuing captives. The father takes the captives out of the devil's domain and transfers them into the son's kingdom.

What does John, the gospel of John, Nick at night, say about the kingdom of God? To Nick, he says what? You cannot enter the kingdom of God unless you are born of the spirit, born from above.

That's now. That's not future. How do you enter the kingdom? I enter it by being born again. So as soon as I'm born again, I'm in the kingdom and I begin to live in the kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom.

We belong in it now. We haven't inherited all of it yet. That's later. There's a future inheritance. Yes. So what does it mean to seek his kingdom?

[46 : 07] To seek his kingdom is to live for the gospel. To seek his kingdom is to witness of the gospel so that other captives might be set free. To seek the kingdom is, Paul said, it is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

It's to live by the work of the Holy Spirit. That's the kingdom. And it has a future element. I look for my security in heaven. I live in a different kingdom.

Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world. It's way bigger than this world. It's an eternal kingdom. It's a huge, it's the king of king of kingdoms.

And he is on his throne, like I love to say, my king is on his throne right now, sitting at the Father's right hand. As Paul says, he is putting his enemies under his feet.

And when he's done, he will hand the kingdom back to the Father. 1 Corinthians 15. That's the kingdom. So what does it mean to seek the kingdom?

[47 : 11] It's huge. It's not one simple little thing. It's huge. It's our whole Christian life. It's following Christ. I love his, Mark said downstairs, when he thinks of the kingdom, he thinks of the rule of God, the reign of God.

How does God reign in my life? Well, that's very personal sense. Let Jesus reign. We say, I offer my life. That's that, in that sense, it's like that. But it's big.

It's big. How does it look? Well, verse 33, how does it look? Sell your possessions and give to the needy.

Okay. Really? Sell all my possessions and give to the needy. And then provide yourselves with money bags, not physical ones that grow old and provide yourselves with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail or thieves and moths don't destroy.

So sell your possessions. The word actually isn't sell, but more like exchange. Exchange your earthly things for heavenly things. And you do that by giving away your earthly things and store up your treasure in heaven.

[48 : 23] How do you store up treasure in heaven? By giving away your earthly things. I always wonder what Jesus meant. Don't lay up your treasure on earth, right, where thieves and moth and wrath destroys, but lay up your treasure in heaven.

What is that? How do you do that? Well, you do it by giving away earthly stuff. Exchange it. Exchange it to the, who needs it?

What do I have extra? What do I have surplus? Well, let's go in our garages and look. Let's go in our basements and let, well, we know we're like dealing with this. Okay, how do we get rid of some of this stuff?

We're giving, we need to give stuff away. Who needs? There's no reason for me to hoard. No reason, and not that we're intentionally hoarding.

We just kind of get forgetful and stick it in the garage and I can't even park in the garage. I just sold my truck and I had two trucks, two old trucks in the garage.

[49 : 25] I'm like, yeah, yeah, and I need to sell them so I sold one and all that space got filled up. What happened? Now I can't be proud about, you know, I park cars in the garage as if that's something to be proud of.

So, let's get practical. Where's your treasure? So, so he ends, Jesus ends in verse 34, right? Where are your treasures there will your heart be? So the question is, where's your treasure? Because that's where your heart is. I can say my heart's with God, but if, but if I treasure something else more, then my heart's not.

What's your treasure? Where do you, where's your treasure? Another way to ask God is what do you value most? What do you treasure most? It could be family. It could be something good. It could be family. It could be, you know, something like that. But if I've made that my treasure and not God, then I'm in trouble.

[50 : 32] Because Jesus said, right, hate your family compared to me. So, here's how Paul addresses it again to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6.

He says again, do, as for the rich in this present age, charge them. He doesn't say, get rid of all your riches. Okay, that's it, isn't it? Okay, he doesn't say, or give it all to the church so that the minister can be rich.

He doesn't say that. As for the rich in this present world, here's what you do. Charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches. Because they might be rich now, but they might lose it tomorrow.

Or God might take them home. Nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches. But what? Set their hopes on what? On God, who richly provides with everything to enjoy.

That's interesting. He richly provides us with everything to enjoy. God wants us to enjoy things? I thought that was interesting. Oh, no, to enjoy.

[51 : 35] He provides us with everything and he wants you to enjoy it. Enjoy that steak, enjoy that meal, enjoy that, you know, that job, enjoy the things that he's giving you. That's interesting.

They are, here we go, go on, here we get practical. They are to do good, to be rich in good works. There we go. Rich in good works. What's that look like? To be generous and ready to share. Thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future. There's eternal, or future security. Storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

How do you store up treasure in heaven? According to Paul, you give it away. To be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure.

That's how you store up treasure in heaven, by giving up your earthly stuff. Find ways to do that. Are you doing it? If you're not doing it, look for ways to do it. You say, well, we're strapped, we're just barely making it.

[52 : 45] I get it. I've been there. I've been there where, you know, I was realized after a year I was giving to the church out of my savings and I thought, wait a minute, is that right? Because one more year I'll be wiped out.

we, that was a crisis for us. We had to, what do we do? I always believed if I give, God will provide. Well, there was a few years where God didn't provide simply by our giving because our giving was actually contrary to good financial management.

And we had to address the church and let them know and say, what do you want to do? So, in other words, I'm saying there are times where God thins it for us.

It's not as simple as the prosperity preachers say, if you give it, you'll get it. It's not that simple. I think when you first start out, when we first started doing that, God provided it.

It was like, it didn't make sense on paper. So, I got those stories, know that. But then as God was training us and tightening things, it was like, oh, it's not that easy.

[53 : 57] And I have to go address the church now. The church is going to hate me because I addressed the money thing. So, you have to ask yourself personally, okay, Lord, what do we give?

Not just to the church, what do we give to the church? Yes, I need to know that because that's our responsibility to provide for the ministry. But there's other ways God calls me to give, to missions or to service opportunities or if I'm just personally giving to somebody poor on the street.

Right? But in all of it, I seek His kingdom. So, His kingdom is I seek the king and I ask the king, okay, Lord, what do you want me to do?

If we're worried about our future, we're saving up, how much do we do? If we can do. What if I can't do it? What do I do? He'll provide somehow.

Does that make any sense? Guess not. Okay. Okay. Because I think I confused myself there at the end so that's why I was...

[55 : 10] You guys know to throw out stuff that doesn't make sense, right? I pray every week, Lord, hold back my stuff that's not, you know, right?

And it's interesting that Paul says the result is a secure future. Right? Storing up treasure for themselves is a good foundation for the future by giving away.

What a different concept. Store up treasure in heaven by giving away the earthly because that provides a security ahead. I'm becoming rich toward God.

I'm seeking His kingdom because His kingdom is not of this world. I want to invest in that kingdom.

And then he says I experience what life is really about.

Isn't it interesting? Because Jesus said, right, possessions are... Life isn't about possessions. And then he said life isn't about, you know, food and clothing. And here Paul says, when you store up treasure in heaven, you take hold of that which is truly life.

[56 : 17] You don't miss life then. Life, what life's really about is giving away as much as I can. Sharing as much treasure in heaven.

Not here. All right. You got any questions? Rick will answer. Mark will answer.

He knows math. Yeah, he knows math. So if you've got finance questions, ask Rick. He knows math. He knew how to add up 31 for...

I do have a comment to add to that. When we were talking about riches, for many of us, it starts with time.

Just time. Yeah. That belongs to God. Right? Good point. Not just money. Yeah. We can be very selfish and greedy and covetous of our time and not give it and not...

[57 : 20] and be angry with interruptions, especially with... Why? ...calling? Why? Preach it, sister. No, really? I mean, that's... Yeah.

It's something we think we are. Glad you brought that up. Yeah. I do. I used to. Yeah. So our...

Yeah. So we could say not just money but our resources, right? Yeah.

So what God has given us, whether it's our money or our time or our gifts. Yeah. Good point. Thank you, Diane. Father, take these truths that Jesus teaches and apply them to our hearts.

Those of us, Lord, that struggle with covetousness, the desire for more, where we're tempted with that, Lord, help us to watch, to recognize it and to guard against it.

And those of us, Lord, that tend to worry, will we have enough? Will we make it? Help us, Lord, to overcome that by seeking your kingdom, seeking you and your things.

[58 : 24] Show us how to do that. We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.