

Proverbs 16:6 “By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil.”

Scene #1 – Jesus dining with the Pharisee after preaching a hard-core sermon but 11:29 records that the crowds continued to grow (11:37). When they make a judgment about Jesus not washing his hands in a ritual manner, Jesus does a quick-draw of theological smack down. “Hand washing before a meal in this case was not an issue of physical but of ritual cleanliness.”<sup>1</sup>

He begins to say, “Woe!” in reference to the Pharisees that was a way of saying, “You’re in big trouble!” *So here he is at the house of a Pharisee* and Jesus starts talking about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees! You would think that certain “pre-packaged” standards would establish what is and what is not appropriate to discuss at the dinner table but Jesus smashes these to pieces. The straw that broke the camel’s back was ritual purity but Jesus says that cleanliness is *not* next to godliness. You can be clean and respectable on the outside “but inside you are full of robbery and wickedness” (11:39).

Scene #2 – Then a lawyer steps in and acts like a Dad to Jesus (11:45). To which Jesus kind of turns and is like, “Hey there crooked lawyers! Just in case you didn’t understand, “Woe to you too!” (11:46-52). “Woe” is not the “whoa” I need to slow my horse down. Neither is it the “WHOA” from the dudish surfing dialect. Rather, it is the interjection:

οὐαί which “a state of intense hardship or distress—‘disaster, horror.’”  
 ἡ οὐαί ἡ μία ἀπῆλθεν ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ἔτι δύο οὐαί μετὰ ταῦτα ‘the first disaster came; after this there are still two more disasters to come’ [Re 9.12](#); πλὴν οὐαί ὑμῖν τοῖς πλουσίοις ‘how disastrous it will be for you who are rich’ [Lk 6.24](#); οὐαί γάρ μοί ἐστιν ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι ‘how terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the good news’ [1 Cor 9.16](#). In some languages there may not be a noun for ‘disaster,’ but one can express the meaning of the Greek term οὐαί as ‘how greatly one will suffer’ or ‘what terrible pain will come to one.’<sup>2</sup>

Scene #3 – So the scribes and Pharisees like, totally snapped and went off at Jesus! (11:53-54). Like a bunch of hungry wolves looking for a sign of weakness in their intended victim, they snapped and snarled but all to no avail because they could never pin Jesus.

Scene #4 – Have you ever noticed how quickly a crowd will gather when people are getting into it? Luke 12:1 begins with the phrase, “In the meantime...” What had happened in the meantime? A huge, gigantic crowd had gathered to watch Jesus tell the Pharisees what’s what. A crowd of this size we can only compare to a chilling event like the early morning hours of Black Friday... at the mall.”

<sup>1</sup>Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 470.

<sup>2</sup>Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (1:242). New York: United Bible societies.

Scene #5 – A huge crowd begins to trample one another in an attempt to get to Jesus for the purpose of hearing Him (12:1).

Scene #6 – Jesus begins his sermon with a warning about hypocrisy (12:1-3). Talk about calling people out!

Scene #7 – Jesus shifts to warning the listeners of the judgment of God against sin (12:4-7) By this time the crowd had to be loving it because Jesus was nailing “the other side.” By the way, it is easy to get into it when the sins of *other* people are being exposed. Jesus set about to warn all who were present of their sin because ALL have sinned. Our first response to sin being exposed in other people should be a self-introspection and a cry to God to deliver us from the blindness of pride. Like the song says, “Change my heart O God, make it ever true, change my heart O God, may I be like You.”

Scene #8 – Jesus maneuvers into a straight line of reasoning about Salvation and the persecution and suffering of those who seek to follow Christ by those who refuse to follow Jesus (12:8-12). If that is not heavy enough, notice that in verse 10 Jesus explains The Unpardonable Sin!! Whoa!! Now notice that verse 8 contains the cure whereas the preceding verses speak about the disease. Law to the Proud and Grace to the Humble is *the* modus operandi utilized by Jesus throughout the Gospels. Jesus *never* gave grace to the prideful for the simple reason that one who is filled pride thinks that they only need themselves.

Scene #9 – Then in the midst of this super-serious discussion, one of the greatest and most random interruptions in the entire Bible occurs. A man interrupts Jesus’ sermon by asking Jesus to serve as a legal judge between this man and his brother! The reason: the man wanted his share of the inheritance. Wasn’t this guy listening? Wasn’t he paying attention? In effect, he was giving Jesus an order! Jesus’ words were apparently important and popular enough that there was a human stampede to get within earshot. Where was this guy’s thinking? But instead of telling the man to shut up, sit down and be quiet, Jesus uses this seemingly random question of extremely awkward timing as a springboard for one of the most relevant and heavy parables in all the Bible. Jesus turns to the man and asks him point blank, “Who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” (Notice the dual use of the vocative between the man and Jesus). Who made me a judge for your petty financial issues? I didn’t come as a lawyer or a Judge Judy so don’t think you can sidetrack me from my mission: to seek and save that which was lost.

“*who made me a ruler over you?*” One commentator claimed this was “a question literally repudiating the office which Moses assumed.”<sup>3</sup> Exodus 2:14 “*But he said, “Who made you a <sup>1</sup>prince or a judge over us? Are you <sup>2</sup>intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and said, “Surely the matter has become known.”*

So Jesus stops his sermon to address this one individual with a pertinent question. I might add that this man is like many people today. They want Jesus to help them with their

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<sup>3</sup>Jamieson, Robert ; Fausset, A. R. ; Fausset, A. R. ; Brown, David ; Brown, David: *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997.

<sup>1</sup> Lit man, a prince

<sup>2</sup> Lit saying in your heart

finances but refuse to repent and turn to Him as Lord and Savior effectively transferring control of their lives to Him.

Scene #10 – Jesus then turns back to the crowd and begins the parable with a warning about “all kinds of covetousness.” In warning the people Jesus uses one of the strongest possible words to demand attention, ὁρᾶτε, a 2<sup>nd</sup> person, plural, present, active, **imperative** = **PAY ATTENTION!**

He begins with a warning and an explanatory statement to the negative: The importance of one’s life is not related to wealth.

The hearers are commanded (yes, Jesus’ words were not a suggestion) against the thief of greed. Jesus’ words are literally, “**LOOK OUT!** And be guarded φυλάσσεσθε (2<sup>nd</sup> person, plural, present, middle, **imperative**), or be on your guard, against/because of ἀπό (a preposition of either disassociation ‘from’ or reason ‘because of’), all kinds of covetousness, *because* the abundance/abounding to his life it is NOT from his possessions.”

‘**LOOK OUT!** And be guarded against every form of covetousness, because the abundance of one’s life is not from one’s possessions.’

Have you ever been watching TV when there is an urgent, severe, weather alert? The warning trumps whatever is on TV in importance, no matter if it is the last episode of Lost or the first episode of the new season of 24, American idol finale, or God forbid, a soap opera. Jesus is giving us an urgent warning to be alert to the dangers of greed and covetousness. Just as a soldier intently watches enemy movements on the frontlines or a lady looks for a sale in her favorite clothing store, Jesus is saying that we need to be on super alert to the danger of greed.

\*But apparently the mind of the man who asked the random question was so consumed by greed and covetousness that he was unable “to hear” the words of Jesus on subject that really matter.

Notice the absolute statement Jesus gives to begin the parable. Jesus essentially says that money is not what life is all about. Jesus uses a present, active, participle to picture the temporary nature in which a person “possesses” their possessions.

12:15

Q# Why would Jesus use such a strong word in a strong way to warn against greed? I mean, isn’t money just money? What’s the big deal? Notice the caution against ALL or different kinds of covetousness. With the occurrence of πάσης. Covetousness can take many different forms. Just like a chameleon lizard changes color to blend in with its background, so covetousness changes colors to blend in with the background as not to appear harmful at all.

A.T. Robertson says, “A rather awkward Lukan idiom: “In the abounding (articular infinitive) to one out of the things belonging (articular participle) to him.”<sup>4</sup>

\*Copperhead in Coronado – Point = Greed is like that. If it can find any environment within your heart and mind that is conducive to it, it will slither in, coil up and if you’re not careful, strike you with the toxic venom of an all-consuming greed.

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<sup>4</sup>Robertson, A.T.: *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, 1997, S.

Point = This is a danger to both ‘poor’ and ‘rich’ people. You say, “How is that possible Jeff?” Here it is: poor people focus on the money they don’t have and rich people focus on the money they do have.

APPL: The church gains its security more from its bank accounts than in the promises of God when we obey the plan of God.

Check out how Jesus dealt with this issue, first he addressed the man, then Jesus addresses the crowd and after the parable, Jesus turns to His disciples and gives them specific action points in dealing with greed and covetousness.

So the parable begins...

### Explain the Parable

1. He did well – God blessed the man’s labor 12:16

Psalm 39: 6 “Surely every man walks about as <sup>1</sup>a phantom; Surely they make an uproar for nothing; He amasses *riches* and does not know who will gather them.”

2. He reasoned on what to do next = He never consulted God 12:17

\*Consulting with the Economist, Rolling Stones, friends, and the various opinions of other people but never with the Creator of this world.

3. He concluded that he should be the recipient = churches spend money on themselves

4. “My!” – The purpose of his work was self-gratification, not Savior-gloryifying  
\*Me Monster

5. He desired to “retire” – ‘Don’t rock the boat! I want to kick back and take it easy!’ I want an easy life! I’ve worked hard... *I DESERVE THIS!*

6. God speaks = Success in the eyes of the world but an Epic Failure in the eyes of God. “What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but yet loses his own soul” (Luke 9:25).

12:20: God talks! Throughout all the man’s reasoning there is never any evidence that he *ever* consulted with God! ***Isn’t it interesting that the rich guy would be a success by the world’s standards but a failure in the eyes of God?***

7. God provides the all too obvious commentary, “So is the man who stores up treasure *for himself*, and is not rich toward God.”

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<sup>1</sup> Lit *an image*

***Main Idea: A life that is consumed with money is a wasted life = 12:21***

\*Going through security at the airport

Trash all the possessions, then lay them all upon the altar

Who is the rich man? He could be anyone.

**Action Points:**

1. Consult God and His Word about financial decisions – 12:17 ***“And he began saying to himself...”*** = God was never a part of the rich fool’s decisions.

The opposite of what the man did. If he consulted only within himself and was declared a fool by Jesus, one who consults with God about financial decisions would then be wise.

\*Never operate on the mentality, “That’s the way we’ve always done it,” which are the Seven Last Words of a local church.

“The reason why both in public and private affairs, many things occur contrary to our expectation, because we have not been diligent about spiritual things in the first place, and secondarily about the secular, but have inverted the order” – John Chrysostome (61, *Life and Practice in the Early Church*).

2. Realize that Life is not all about possessions/money – 12:15 ***“for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”***

\*Martin Luther: Conversion of (1) The Heart (2) The Mind (3) The Pocketbook

After warning of covetousness, Jesus told the people that a real life does not consist of possessions.

“The virtues of paganism are glittering vices” – attributed to Augustine (53, in Kierkegaard).

Ecclesiastes 5:10 “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance *with its* income. This too is <sup>1</sup>vanity.”

3. Recognize the foolishness of stockpiling with the purpose of security – 12:20 ***“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?’”***

The fact that we all have an appointment with death should bring us to the place of not trusting in riches.

\*Hotel Room – You won’t be there forever

I Timothy 6:6-10 “But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men

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<sup>1</sup>Or *futility*

into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all <sup>1</sup>sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

Psalm 10:3 “For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire, And <sup>1</sup>the greedy man curses *and* spurns the LORD.”

\*John Piper “A Waste” – senior citizens’ sea shell collection

#### 4. Remember the uncertainty of life – 12:20 “...***This very night your soul is required of you.***”

Psalm 23:4-5 “Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration *of it*.  
5 When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For *wealth* certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies *toward* the heavens.”

Psalm 39: 6 “Surely every man walks about as <sup>1</sup>a phantom; Surely they make an uproar for nothing; He amasses *riches* and does not know who will gather them.”

#### 5. Invest your possessions wisely – 12:18 “***I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.***”

\****Flavio buying food for poor pastor and his family in Brazil***

According to UNICEF, 24,000 children die each day due to poverty. And they “die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death.”<sup>5</sup>

“Almost half the world — over three billion people — live on less than \$2.50 a day.” – [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org)<sup>6</sup>

Point = We can break the chain of materialism by not building bigger barns for ourselves but giving out of our surplus to let people know that God is real; and it may involve us tearing down our barns so that missionaries can bring the light of the Gospel to the most spiritually dark places on the planet.

#### Q# HOW? A. Seek first the kingdom of God – 12:31 “***But seek first His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.***”

Oswald Chambers says, “Beware of anything that competes with loyalty to Jesus Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lit *the evils*

<sup>1</sup> Or *blesses the greedy man*

<sup>1</sup> Lit *an image*

<sup>5</sup> See Today, over 24,000 children died around the world from this web site. (Note that the statistic cited uses children as those under the age of five. If it was say 6, or 7, the numbers would be even higher.)

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/715/today-over-24000-children-died-around-the-world>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats#src3>

<sup>7</sup> Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Westwood: Barbour and Company Inc., 1963), 13.

Total number of people groups  
11,702

Unreached people groups  
6,780

Unreached people groups 100,000 and greater  
2,134

Unengaged unreached people groups 100,000 and greater  
581

People groups directly or indirectly engaged by IMB personnel  
964

Total IMB field personnel  
5,296<sup>8</sup>

According to the IMB:

People not having an adequate opportunity to hear the gospel: 3,558,229,915

Now it makes sense why Jesus said to do the following...

**6. Remember the power of lasting investments – 12:33-34 “*Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, and unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”**

Psalm 62:10c “If riches increase, do not set *your* heart *upon* them.”

Hebrews 13:5-6 “*Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,” 6 so that we confidently say, “THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?”

I Timothy 6:19 (the actions taken by a young man following God) “storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

\*FBC Colleyville – Well Diggers on Mission Trips = to provide clean drinking water

\*Carlos in Brazil – Had forsaken everything for the Gospel

**7. Remember that we will one day meet Jesus – 12:40 “*You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.*”**

***Main Idea: A life that is consumed with money is a wasted life = 12:21***

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/>