

Bible Stories for Adults

The Foolish Rich Man

Luke 12:13-34

Opening

- Gathering: Why do the wealthiest people in the world keep working hard to get richer?
- Today's Focus: Jesus taught that riches on earth are nothing in comparison to riches in heaven.
- Key Verses: *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
- For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* Luke 12:34

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Wisdom of God (*Luke 15:1*)

- Besides His powers, what attracted people to Jesus that was evident from His childhood?
Luke 2:46-47, 52 = His great wisdom and understanding
- What happened when the Jewish leaders tried to use His reputation for wisdom against Him?
Luke 20:20, 26, 39-40 = They were unable to trap Him and they gave up
- Why were they unable to trap Him in a bad answer to a difficult question?
1 Corinthians 1:25 (18-25) = Jesus had God's wisdom which far exceeded that of man
- Besides the Jewish leaders who tried to trap Him, did anyone else come to hear Jesus' wisdom?
Luke 15:1 = His wisdom was one of the main reasons people came to see Jesus
- How many people were present to hear Jesus' wisdom in today's story?
Luke 12:1 = Many thousands

The Judge (*Luke 12:13-14*)

- What request of Jesus' wisdom prompted the story in today's lesson?
Luke 12:13 = Someone asked Jesus to help clear up his inheritance
- How did Jesus wisely respond to this request? = He should go to the courts with trouble
Luke 12:14 = He rebuked the man for asking Him to take sides in a clear legal issue
- The term *man* was a severe form of address. Where else do we see this word used? = Also *woman*
Luke 22:54-62 = Peter used it 3 times to adamantly deny he was associated with Jesus

The Inheritance (*Numbers 27:8-11*)

- Why was the man wrong in looking for Jesus' wisdom in this question?
Numbers 27:8-11 = Dividing an inheritance was defined very clearly and plainly
- Did God leave any questions about how an inheritance should be given? = Double-share to first-born
Deuteronomy 21:15-17 = No, it was clear even in potentially confusing situations
- Using Israel and the land as an example, what did people have to do to get their inheritance?
Leviticus 20:24 = Just accept it, God gave it to them
- Didn't the Israelites have to fight the Canaanites to get their inheritance?
Deuteronomy 4:37-38 = No, God drove them out and gave the inheritance
- What condition did God have in His covenant for the Israelites to keep their inheritance?
Deuteronomy 6:13-15 = Fear and serve Him only - or you will lose your inheritance

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Our Inheritance (*Hebrews 9:15*)

What inheritance do we have as part of God's new covenant through Jesus?

Hebrews 9:15 = The promised eternal inheritance

Where will we receive our eternal inheritance?

1 Peter 1:3-4 = It is kept fresh in heaven for us

Do we need to be as good as we can to receive this inheritance?

Galatians 3:17-18 = Inheritance doesn't depend on the law, it is God's promised gift

How do we know that we will receive this inheritance?

Ephesians 1:13-14 = We have been marked with the Spirit to guarantee our inheritance

What great Old Testament prophet understood the importance of the inheritance of the Spirit?

2 Kings 2:9 = Elisha asked Elijah for double portion of his spirit (first-born inheritance)

Greed (*Luke 12:15*)

Why was Jesus so bothered by this man's request?

Luke 12:15 = He saw strong signs of covetousness and greed

With all of the other sins displayed around Him, why would Jesus be so upset at seeing greed?

Colossians 3:5 = Greed is idolatry - greed makes a god out of possessions

How important is it to God that His people avoid greed, or covetousness?

Exodus 20:17 = 20% of God's central commands for mankind deal specifically with greed

Why is the idolatry of greed such a horrible sin to be avoided?

Ephesians 5:5 = Greedy people will not receive heaven's inheritance

Greed - An Unforgivable Sin? (*Luke 18:24-27*)

How could simple greed keep someone from going to heaven?

Luke 16:13 = Can't serve both God and mammon (Hebrew for *riches*)

Is there any way for a greedy person to be saved? = *Repentance* - A change of mind and soul

Acts 3:19 = He can repent and turn from greed to God

How easy is it for someone to turn from greed?

Luke 18:24-25 = Very hard, easier for a camel to go through eye of a needle

Does this mean it is impossible to be rich and go to heaven?

Luke 18:26-27 = It is not impossible with God - serve God or mammon?

The Rich Fool (*Luke 12:16-21*)

What story did Jesus then tell to make sure the people understood His point?

Luke 12:16-20 = The Parable of the Rich Fool

How does this story fit with Jesus' message on greed? (Reread with emphasis on *I* and *my*)

Luke 12:16-19 = Twelve I's and my's in only 3 verses

How does God show this rich farmer that his wealth is a foolish god? = His god can't save him

Luke 12:20 = God takes his life before he can enjoy his god of wealth

Is Jesus saying here that it is wrong to be wealthy and to prepare for the future?

Luke 12:21 = No, it is foolish to be rich in anything but poor in God

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Stored Treasures (*Matthew 6:19-21*)

How does this rich farmer fit a description David gave of an evil man?

Psalm 52:7 = He trusted in his wealth instead of God

Do only rich or cut-throat people need to hear this lesson?

Matthew 10:37-38 = No, there are many things besides wealth that one could covet

What treasures should the rich farmer have stored?

Matthew 6:19-20 = Treasures in heaven that would be secure

Why would treasures in heaven be so secure?

Matthew 6:21 = *Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*

Seeking Riches (*1 Timothy 6:7-8; Luke 12:22-32*)

What should we remember when we are tempted to focus on storing treasures on earth?

1 Timothy 6:7 = *We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it*

There are no pockets in a shroud. You don't see a U-Haul behind a hearse.

How much earthly treasures should it take to make us content?

1 Timothy 6:8 = Just our earthly needs - food and clothing

What did Jesus say after the parable that tells how much we should worry about these needs?

Luke 12:22, 30-31 (22-31) = God knows we need these things so He will take care of us

Besides giving us these things, what more valuable thing has God given us?

Luke 12:32 = The kingdom of heaven

Getting Rich (*1 Timothy 6:9-10*)

What about all of the people who aren't content with food and clothing and want to get rich?

1 Timothy 6:9 = They fall into a trap that leads to ruin and destruction

Will being a Christian and going to church every week keep us out of this trap?

Matthew 13:22 = The *deceitfulness of wealth* can choke the seed of the gospel

Is this because money is so evil?

1 Timothy 6:10 = Money isn't evil, the love of money (greed) is the root of all evil

Being Rich (*1 Timothy 6:17-19*)

What if we have more than basic needs? Do we need to get rid of our material wealth?

1 Timothy 6:17 = No, just don't put your hope in wealth - put it in God

What should we remember about our wealth? = Reread also last part of 1 Timothy 6:17

Acts 17:24-25 = God gave us everything we have

Why might God bless us with material blessings and wealth?

Genesis 12:2 = We are blessed to be a blessing

How does Paul describe this to Timothy?

1 Timothy 6:18 = Be rich in good deeds, be generous and share with others

What does this do to the treasures we are storing up?

1 Timothy 6:19 = It results in us storing treasures in heaven rather than on earth

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Rich or Poor (*Proverbs 30:7-9*)

Did Jesus agree that giving from what God gives us can store treasures in heaven?

Luke 12:33 = Yes

Does this mean that we can get to heaven by giving money to others?

Luke 12:34 = No, it can be a visible result of trusting God instead of money

In conclusion, should we ask to be rich to bless others or to be poor to keep from temptation?

Proverbs 30:7-9 = Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread

What was the one material request Jesus included in His example of how to pray?

Matthew 6:11 = Give us today our daily bread - take care of our needs (not desires)

Closing Prayer

For Further Study (*Luke 12:22-30*)

What six reasons did Jesus give why we should not worry about material things?

Luke 12:22-23 = A person is more than a physical body; Food and clothes are not top needs

Luke 12:24 = God loves and cares for you more than you know

Luke 12:25-26 = Worrying doesn't accomplish anything

Luke 12:27 = The best that we can do on our own doesn't come close to what God can do

Luke 12:28 = If God takes great care of the valueless, He'll care more for you than you do

Luke 12:29-30 = God knows what you need and will provide it

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. In what ways have I been greedy?
(*Luke 12:13-15; Proverbs 15:27; 28:25; 29:4; Ezekiel 33:30-31; Mark 4:18-19; Ephesians 5:1-5; Colossians 3:5; 1 Peter 2:11; 5:2; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 2:15-17*)
2. What accomplishments and achievements am I most proud of?
(*Luke 12:16-21; Deut. 8:10-14; Romans 4:2-5; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 4:7; 13:4; Ephesians 2:8-9*)
3. How have I tried to become rich?
(*Luke 12:21; Deut. 8:17-18; Proverbs 11:16; 23:4; 28:8, 20; Matthew 6:19-24; 1 Timothy 6:6-10*)
4. In what ways am I rich?
(*Luke 12:19, 21, 34; Psalm 119:72; Proverbs 15:6; 1 Corinthians 1:4-5; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 1:18; 3:8; Hebrews 11:26; Revelation 3:17-20*)
5. What do I do with the riches God as given me?
(*Luke 12:19, 32-34; 16:10-13; Genesis 12:2; Psalm 49:16-20; Proverbs 3:9-10; 2 Corinthians 9:10-14; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; James 5:1-6*)