

# Luke

## The Gospel for Everyone

Study 21 | Luke 12:13-34

“New Treasure”

### News and Needs

#### Upcoming Events:

- Daily Scripture Reading Guide Link Now on Website! Here you will find a Scripture reading guide taken from the Book of Common Prayer. The reading is designed to take you through the entire Bible every two years. Each reading includes a morning and evening Psalm selection, Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel reading. Go to our website, [www.resurrectionwilliamsburg.com](http://www.resurrectionwilliamsburg.com), click on Community, then click on Home Groups, and scroll down to find the Daily Scripture Reading Guide Link.

#### Opportunities to Serve:

-Ethiopia Team leaves Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> until Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for the Project in Addis Ababa, Andy and Bev Warren the project managers, and our team going over this year - Pastor Chris Hildebrand, Audrey Morrison, and Jerod Huggins.

### **1. Is there anything wrong with the man’s request in verse 13? What are the motivations, thoughts and actions that Jesus attacks in his parable? Name some ways that you see these expressed here in New York.**

We can only guess at the situation behind this man’s question. Jesus certainly seems to have some insight, based on the nature of his reply. As an observer, though, we would likely have had no reason to suspect the man of inappropriate or nefarious purposes. Rabbis and elders made difficult judgments for Israelites all the time; this man’s request for Jesus to decide a dispute over an inheritance is precisely the type of case a respected rabbi would be called upon to speak into. Jesus seems to perceive covetousness and worldly desire in the man and his situation, as he goes on to tell a very challenging parable right after refusing the man’s request to act as judge. The parable mentions or alludes to ‘covetousness’, ‘abundance of possessions’, ‘riches’, ‘maximizing storage to amass wealth and possessions’, ‘trust in one’s own provision’, and ‘presumption’. Here is a definition of ‘greed’ that kind of sums up these postures, in order to help you get going in your discussion.

*Some desire to increase one's wealth is nearly universal and acceptable in any culture, but this simple want is not considered greed. Greed is the extreme form of this desire, especially where one desires things simply for the sake of owning them (such as the desire to have great amounts of money not to purchase objects, but possession or the money is an end in itself). Greed is the selfish desire for or pursuit of money, wealth, power, food, or other possessions, especially when this denies the same goods to others. People who do not view unconstrained acquisitiveness as a vice will generally use a word other than greed, which has strong negative connotations. Greed denotes desire to acquire wealth or possessions beyond the needs of the individual, especially when this accumulation of possession denies others legitimate needs or access to those or other resources. For example, amassing a large collection of sea shells would not be considered greed, unless in doing so, the needs of others were jeopardized. Essential to the concept of greed is the awareness that the needs of others are denied, thus rivalrous goods exemplify greed while non-rivalrous goods may not. Greed also often involves using wealth to gain power over others, sometimes by denying wealth or power.*

How does your group witness and partake in greed and the other related postures as you participate in our culture? We live in a capitalistic, consumerist society, and while this has produced much good, how does greed and other aspects of this parable sneak in to our participation in this culture? Where and how is greed stimulated, encouraged, rewarded? In what ways are you tempted to be greedy? Especially as a resident of the ‘financial capital’ of the U.S.?

**2. What does anxiety have to do with covetousness and the pursuit of wealth? What do people worry about and desire in 22-34? How are they rebuked? How are they encouraged?**

How do you see greed *and anxiety* being expressed by the man in the crowd? By the rich man in the parable? By the people described in 22-34? Remember that as a Rabbi Jesus would have been understood by the man in the crowd as one with the authority to deliberate his dispute with his brother, according to the Torah. Instead of parsing the law and this man's rights, Jesus warns the man and the crowd against 'covetousness', and this in a case where quite possibly the man had 'rights' to claim. What does this tell us about Jesus? About his priorities? About his approach toward the human heart with regards to possessions? For one thing, it what may seem like a non-sequitur when Jesus shifts abruptly from his parable to a discussion of anxiety. But is it? What connections does Jesus seem to make in these verses? How does the pursuit of our own provisions breed anxiety--in the rich and the poor? What thoughts and actions does Jesus deconstruct as he discusses anxiety over our provisions? How does he attempt to 'relieve' our anxiety? Describe the line of his argumentation.

**3. What do you worry about? And what does this tell you about the things you most desire? How does this passage challenge and encourage you in those areas? What are some practical ways we could help one another to change? To store up treasure in heaven and set our heart on it?**

This last set of questions is meant to get your group to think more deeply about the ways in which our compromises with the world around us with regards to self-provision are actually destructive to ourselves and others. How does our anxiety dehumanize us and fail to actually help us? What do the things we fret about tell us about those earthly things we are treasuring? And how does greed affect us as individuals and communities? What would it look like if we as individuals and as a church exhibited a real freedom from greed and anxiety in our shared and public life together? What would it look like concretely if we were not greedy, self-protective, focused on 'things' in this life, anxious in toil, and presumptuous, but were instead poor in spirit, radically generous, not clinging to our 'rights', trusting in God to provide all we need? How can we help one another move toward such in our shared life together? What does it mean in real, daily life to become people who 'treasure heaven'?

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