

The rich fool

Luke 12 vv.13-15.

Are you happy, boys and girls? ... Are you contented, really contented? ...

To give a direct answer to that question is not exactly easy, is it? ... And yet ... in truth you are not really contented! One would so much like to have this; another longs to have that. Most of you have a longing for something ... yes ... you may not even be able to name it, but it must be something really marvellous, something very fine.

There sits a boy who longs to be rich. Oh, if only he had money, plenty of money, he would be happy. Then he would be able to buy everything he saw and wanted. There is a girl who longs to have expensive, beautiful clothes, or costly toys.

So many thoughts whirl in your heads. So many longings spring up in your hearts. You may not talk about them, O no, but you lie in bed at night perhaps, thinking about them. And with these grand thoughts you fall asleep at last. Sometimes you even dream about them. Is it not true, sometimes? ...

Are there some among you who do not worry about such things? ... Are there some who long for something different? ... Are there any, who sometimes cannot get to sleep because they are so unhappy; because they must die, and are not ready to die?

Oh, there may well be one or two such, but with most it is not so. And yet ... you know ...

In the last chapter we pointed out the necessity of one thing. One thing is needful!

Just suppose that you were rich, so rich that you could buy anything you desired. Would you be happy then? ...

Of course not! If you then became very ill of what use then would be all your lovely toys or fine clothes? ... None at all! You would not look at your toys, and the clothes, of which you were so proud, would hang in the wardrobe. Nobody would look at them. And if you were to die, would you be able to take these things with you? ... Of course not, you would have to leave everything behind.

Do not covet or put first the things of this world, but pray for eternal blessings. This is not my idea, you can read it in God's Word. It is not what

I say, it is what the Lord Jesus says. Just listen, and I will tell you.

The Lord Jesus did not remain in Judea and Jerusalem, but went to the other side of the Jordan. There, ages before, had lived Sihon and Og, who were defeated by Moses. Thither David had gone when he fled before Absalom. There Absalom was killed by Joab and his servants, while he was hanging from the oak. The country was called PEREA.

Well now, Jesus went to Perea, because the Pharisees in Jerusalem sought His life. For the time being He is in safety there.

Look, there He walks with His disciples along the roads of Transjordan. A great multitude follows Him. They want to hear Him preach. They want to see His signs and wonders.

The Lord spoke about many things, but I shall not deal with them all, since some are still too difficult for you.

Suddenly someone among the crowd which surrounds Him cries out: "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me."

There was then an inheritance, which was to^{be} divided between two brothers. Their father and mother have died, and now one man is not content with what he received. Therefore he goes to Jesus and wants the Lord to deal with the matter. The Lord Jesus must command the brother of this man to divide the inheritance fairly.

But the Lord answers at once: "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" It is as though the Lord says: "Man, what are you thinking? I have not come into the world to rule over worldly goods, but I have come to save My people from the dominion of sin and of Satan."

Then the Lord Jesus turns to the listening multitude and warns them: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth."

And then He tells them a parable. Just listen!

Luke 12 vv. 16-21

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully," the Lord begins.

He was a very rich man. He had fields and vineyards. He had barns into

which every year the harvest and fruit of the land was carefully stored away. He lived in a large and beautiful house. Very likely he had many servants and maidservants who worked for him on the land, or looked after his home.

One year there was a wonderful summer. Sufficient rain had fallen. Many a day there was fine weather, and then the sun shone across the beautiful fields. The rich man's land had been sown with wheat and barley. The vineyards were full with clusters of young grapes. How everything grew that year. Marvellous! The wheat had scarcely ever stood so well. There had not been so many grapes for years. The fruit trees were laden with well-formed, succulent fruit.

Every day the rich man walked among his fields and vineyards. He would rub his hands together with pleasure and his eyes would gleam. He thought to himself: "Ah, this is fine. I shall soon be richer than ever. Perhaps I shall even be the richest man in the land."

Thoughts of death ... thoughts of eternity ... a desire for mercy ... such thoughts did not enter the rich man's head. He had no time for that! His wealth was his all. He preferred money and goods to a heart renewed by grace. And is it so with you also? ...

Smiling happily about the rich harvest, he walks across his domains. He comes near the barns into which it will all be laid up shortly.

He stops all of a sudden.

"These barns are really too small," he mutters to himself. "It will never all go into them. Definitely not!" "What shall I do?"

Pensively he stands there, stroking his forehead with his hand. Suddenly a wonderful idea comes into his head.

"This will I do," says he, cheerfully, "I will pull down my ~~xxx~~ barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my goods and my fruits."

With this thought he hurries home.

Perhaps some of you are thinking: "Now, why does the rich man not have a few extra barns built on? Surely that would also answer?"

Certainly, you are right! But he does not want to do that. No, no. He must have larger, better barns. Those old barns must be demolished. He has plenty of money. And then ... of course, people will be able to see how rich he is. Then people will stand amazed before those large, new barns, and cry out: "What a rich and influential man he is."

Happy and cheerful he treads the floors of his luxurious home which is more like a palace.

He thinks to himself: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

When at last he retires to rest at night, he lies there thinking about it. No, he does not bow his knees to God. He gives not a thought to thanking God for ^{the} rich, rich blessing. Oh, people will consider him a wise and intelligent man.

But ... God does not say that he is wise or intelligent. God says that he is a FOOL. Why is that? ...

Well, that same night he died suddenly. He had not given such a thing a thought.

Look, there he lies on his fine~~r~~ feather-bed, white and cold, dead!

Outside, the wind rustles softly through the ripening cornfields. The full-laden ears droop well over. But he will not eat one grain of it. He is dead. Someone else shall reap his cornfields. Someone else shall eat his grain.

The wind rustles through his vineyards too. The huge bunches of grapes sway gently in the breeze. But he shall not pluck one of them. He shall not put one grape in his mouth, for he is dead.

Nothing has he been able to take with him. What good was all his wealth to him now? None at all. He had to appear before God's judgment seat. Thence he was cast into eternal ruin. This rich man was a fool, a great fool, for he had neither sought nor served God in his life. His heart was not renewed, neither had he ever asked for such a blessing. His many sins were not forgiven. He had thought only of his riches, and not at all of God.

Others came to live on his farm. Others harvested what he had sown.

He was buried and soon after none thought of him again.

He was forgotten!

So you see, boys and girls, that is the parable which the Lord Jesus told. By means of this parable he warned the people to beware of covetousness and greed. Did the dissatisfied man realise that this parable applied to him?

The Lord said: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap;

which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? ... Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not ... If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither live in careful suspense. ... Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Oh, the Lord Jesus said much more on that occasion. He said that we must be watchful. We must be vigilant, that death come not upon us when we are unprepared. Thus the Lord spoke to the listening disciples. The Lord also speaks these words to us however.

Do you lie awake at night dreaming of riches and honour? ... Yes? ... Then you are fools. What if you were to have to die that night? ... Are you able to meet God? ... Are you able to die? ... Do you know whether the Lord Jesus suffered for your sins? ... Is He your Saviour?

O children, give these things more consideration. Pray for repentance.

Plead with Him for the pardon of your sins. Though you may be poor; though you may lie upon a creaky old bed up under the roof tiles, so to speak, that is no disadvantage. Though your clothes may be old and worn, and though you may not have toys like other children, let it not trouble you. It is not the riches of this WORLD which give happiness, but the riches which are in GOD!

The riches of the world are temporal, but the riches in God are eternal.

Never forget that!
