

Lessons From A Bankrupt

Introduction. We live in a time of so much worry about money. In fact, that worry consistently ranks at the top of lists of modern anxieties. In Luke 12:13-21, Jesus had just spoken the parable of “a certain rich man” to expose the sin and folly of covetousness. The Lord never missed an opportunity to let the light of truth shine into dark, sin-clouded souls. So then, in vv. 22-34, He impresses on the hearts of His disciples the needlessness of harassing anxiety or worry about material concerns.

The thrust of Christ’s teaching is that the child of God does not act like the worldly person. We live by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), and faith is always tested. If we will analyze the lessons from this spiritually bankrupt man, the rich man who suddenly died a spiritual pauper can teach us how to lay up treasures in Heaven.

I. The Value Of Life (vv. 22-23)

- A. We do not live to eat, but eat to live, and life is the gift of God. God has given us a life and a body. Do we not think that He will provide food and clothing also?
- B. This thought is especially precious to the children of God. We have been made partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), we are a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17), we walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4), and we have the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23). This life is far more than the meat that supplies it with energy.
- C. “Worry” means “to be in suspense” or “be up in the air.” Your life, as the follower of Christ, is of more value to Him than the food and clothes needed to sustain that life. Therefore, take no thought for your life. He who gives the greater will not fail in the less (cp. 1 Peter 5:7).

II. The Action Of The Ravens (v. 24)

- A. The second reason why we can trust in God regarding the physical part of life is the ravens. This is an example of a “how much more” argument in the scriptures.
- B. The ravens represent either birds of little value or birds that were unclean (Leviticus 11:13-15; Deuteronomy 14:11-14). They were unworthy of care. Jesus assures us that the God who cares for these worthless birds will surely care for us. They were not redeemed by the blood of His Son (Ephesians 1:7), nor called with a holy calling (2 Timothy 1:8-9).
- C. Furthermore, the ravens, with neither “storehouse nor barn,” were happily unconscious of their physical poverty; the rich man who would “pull down his barns and build larger ones” (v. 18) was equally unconscious of his spiritual poverty. The raven’s ignorance was its bliss; the rich man’s ignorance was his curse. Make certain that you are on the correct side.

III. The Growth Of The Lilies (v. 27).

- A. If God clothes and adorns the grass that may go into the oven tomorrow with the lilies, how much more carefully will He clothe you who are going into the Father's house above? The glory of the grass was greater than Solomon’s glory (1 Kings 3:13; 1 Chronicles 29:25). Solomon could afford the finest clothing, but these common flowers could do absolutely nothing toward making their “clothes.”

- B. Jesus also contrasted the short lifespan of the flowers with the implied eternal life that lay before the disciples. God's meticulous and lavish care for mere perishing flowers assures us of His unfailing love for His own people who will exist with Him in eternity (Revelation 7:14-17). In view of this, the disciples' "little faith" in v. 28 is all the more shameful.
- C. Therefore, with regard to supply and adorning, the disciples of Christ rest in the Lord and do not have a doubtful mind (v. 29). But this rest does not mean idleness (1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:10) nor failure (Philippians 4:19).

IV. The Knowledge Of The Father (v. 30)

- A. Jesus testified, "Your Father knows." Coming as they do from the lips the eternal Son, they are unspeakably precious to the care-burdened heart, for Jesus does know the deep, real love and faithfulness of the Father's heart toward those who are His blood-bought children.
- B. Pagans do not have the same relationship saints have with a loving, caring, providing heavenly Father (Isaiah 44:14-17). To know that He knows their needs is sufficient assurance for all believers.
- C. Why harass your hearts with anxious thoughts, as if your Father neither knew nor cared about your needs? If you can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," you may confidently add, "I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1; cp. Hebrews 13:5). The Lord knows how to take care of His people (1 Kings 17:4-6, 14-16; 2 Kings 6:15-18). When we are secure in that knowledge, we can turn all our attention to the promise of Christ.

V. The Promise Of Christ (v. 31)

- A. Those who seek the kingdom of God first as the object of their life will have everything that "the nations of the world seek after" added to them.
- B. Kingdom living involves the rule of God in your life (Luke 17:21). It is within you; it is the exaltation of King Jesus in your heart. It is spiritual and transcends the physical. It is the most important treasure you could ever obtain (Matthew 13:44-46).
- C. Seeking involves searching, soliciting, and striving. It is active, not passive. A seeker is always alert, on guard, and vigilant. We will find what we are looking for. Is it ease? Earthly treasure? Or personal pleasure? Paul commanded Timothy to pursue what is important (2 Timothy 2:22) and set his priorities on God (1 Timothy 4:8).

VI. The Condition Of The Flock (v. 32)

- A. The Psalms and the prophets frequently use the word "flock" for the people of God (Psalm 77:20; Isaiah 40:11; Micah 4:8; 5:4). It speaks of the small number of true disciples, but also of the care they may expect from their Shepherd.
- B. Jesus goes on to speak of the Father's gifts to His people. These are not wrung from Him as though He were unwilling to give; it is His good pleasure to give (James 1:17). And His gift is the kingdom — the very kingdom they have just been told to seek.

- C. Being given the kingdom means possessing its benefits and authority. By being a part of this flock, we are securing a crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8), a crown of life (James 1:12), and a crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4). We will sit on a throne of power (Revelation 3:21; cp. Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30). Therefore, do not have anxiety about your life. You are special to God!

VII. The Character Of The Heart (v. 34)

- A. A lot of people misunderstand v. 33. Jesus' advice to sell one's possessions and give to the poor fits into this context. It is not an absolute command but an illustration of the kind of faith that trusts God more than worldly security.
- B. The heart and the treasure go together. Anyone's heart, the concentration of his energies and interests, is always with his treasure — it is what he values most.
- C. Seeing that everything needful for this life is freely promised us, we are relieved from anxious thoughts or worry, that we might be entirely free to set our whole hearts' love and focus on what is above (John 8:36; Colossians 3:1). Christ's mother said in John 2:5, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Conclusion. The main question is, "Where is your heart?" If our hearts are fixed on the transient nature of earth, then we will always worry. But if we are fixed on the eternal, then God's peace will guard our minds and hearts (Philippians 4:6-9).