

Coming into relationship with Jesus, in His kingdom, changes your relationship with money and wealth and possessions.

Greed is the love of money, regardless of whether you have money or not. Thus, v13-21 is about greed when you have an abundance of wealth, and 22-34 is about greed when you have no money or a lack of wealth/possessions.

1. Beware of Greed

- a. The *love of wealth* is the root of all kinds of evil – a virus that permeates and destroys what it touches, twisting the heart in brokenness
 - i. The parable is precipitated by a younger brother's *demand* for Jesus to make his brother share his inheritance
 1. This brother didn't recognize greed in his own heart, that he was depending upon money or land to give him joy and wellness of the soul
 - ii. Jesus explains that he wasn't here to arbitrate unjust inheritance issues
 1. We don't draw from this that arbitration for injustice is always wrong, but only that Jesus questions whether that's his task
 2. Jesus is busy with greater things at this point, on his way to Jerusalem to the cross, instructing his disciples on what it means to live in his kingdom
 3. So, he takes this opportunity to teach his disciples what it looks like to follow him in regards to wealth and possessions and kingdom and ultimately, what is important – His Kingdom (vv35-48)
 - iii. Jesus also seems to notice that this greed issue is tearing this family apart, dividing brothers at least
- b. Greed is something that sneaks up on you because we are blind to its reality *in ourselves* and thus don't recognize it when it's there
 - i. "Watch out!" - lit. "See!" - Greed is a hidden root that leads to other sins
 - ii. Greed, like a virus, seems to be unseen and unnoticed by our own hearts
 1. It is deceptive in its nature
 - a. Jesus only used this word, "Watch out" in the previous section regarding hypocrisy which is equally deceptive.
 - b. He never uses the following word "be on guard" with anything else
 2. This tells us that greed is sneaky and easily disregarded in our own hearts
 - a. Think about other sins: you know when you are committing some soul-destroying and relationship-breaking sins, i.e. adultery, murder, speaking untruths
 - iii. Thus, be on your guard, because nobody thinks that they're greedy!
 1. 1% of those other people are greedy, but we 99% are not!
 2. When you rub shoulders with those who have more than you, it doesn't matter how much you have, you don't *feel* like you're that well off
 - a. If you make \$15k/year but are around those making \$40k/year, you're not greedy
 - b. If you make \$40k/year and rub shoulders with those making \$95k/year, you're not greedy
 - c. Even if you make six figures but rub shoulders with those making seven figures, you don't feel greedy
 - d. Because of our access to seeing the abundance of others through media and growing communities less importance on social classes (good thing, btw), we are always "rubbing shoulders" with those wealthier than us
 - e. So, none of us thinks that we're greedy no matter how much money or possessions that we may have
 3. Some examples:

- a. In 1930 Keynes predicted that within a century per capita income would increase so that everyone's basic needs were covered and nobody would have to work more than 15 hours/week.
 - i. What happened? Greed.
 - b. Over the past 30 years the proportion of disposable income spent on consumer debt increased by 1/3 and savings plummeted from 11% to less than 1%.
 - i. We're spending more than we're making. Why? Greed.
 - c. Only 1/3 of those who make over \$100k believe that they have enough to buy what they need.
 - i. This means that 2/3 of those making over \$100k don't believe that they have enough for what they need.
 - ii. The most wealthy people in the most wealthy country in the history of the world don't believe that they have enough – we have a greed problem
- iv. This is where money and sex are different, though both soul destructive when they become ultimate to our hearts (see Paul Tripp's book, *Sex and Money*)
 - 1. Since greed is more subversive, Jesus speaks much more about money than sex
 - 2. This is not because sexual sins are less dangerous, but they are more easily recognized than our love of wealth
 - a. Sex has slain its thousands, but money its tens of thousands
 - 3. How many people admit to a struggle with sexual sin? How many to a struggle with greed?
- v. Always question your heart towards money!!
 - 1. This is what it means to "Watch out!" – ask questions: "Who goes there?!"
 - a. What do you really need? What lasts? What is truly good?
 - b. Which kingdom am I investing in with this purchase? Am I teaching my children what to truly depend upon? What will give me Life?
 - c. How much do I want in the bank if Jesus comes back this afternoon?
 - 2. Purposefully rub shoulders with those with much less than you to alter your understanding of need.
 - a. Where's the line that makes my wealth "greed"?
 - b. We always seem to place that line farther up the scale, rather than down.

2. What Symptoms Are We Watching Out For?

- a. Over-comfort - "Soul, you have plenty. Eat, drink, and be merry"
- b. Over-fear – Anxiety and worry about money
 - i. Note that this section on worry immediately follows the teaching about greed
 - 1. Worry reveals that one has set one's heart upon wealth and possessions, but doesn't have them (v29)
 - 2. It is possible to have wealth and not greed, and it's also possible to have greed and not have wealth
 - ii. Because greed can have little and still be greedy, depending upon wealth or possession to give one rest or joy or life
 - 1. But when it doesn't have money, it worries about gaining it
 - 2. When does have it, it worries about losing it
- c. What makes you feel nourished, alive, joyful?
 - i. Ravens are "nourished" by God, though they have no barns and don't even sow or reap.
 - 1. Will you trust God to "nourish" you, to bring life and joy and rest, or are you trusting the works of your hands and the size of your storehouses?

- ii. If you make wealth and possessions and money your security, your safety, your comfort, then you must realize that it's all a lie
 - 1. The parable of the rich fool shows us that there is no trailer hitch on a hearse.
 - 2. Only God can make you truly secure, truly safe, and truly comforted.
 - a. Money can't do it.
 - b. The fool's soul wasn't even his own, he didn't have control over anything, but wealth deceived him into believing that he captained his own soul.
 - c. No matter how much money that you have, you can't stop tragedy, broken relationships, death in all its forms.
 - i. Frankly, some of these happen more often with more money (family breakups, estate arguments, etc.)
- d. What makes you beautiful and glorious?
 - i. The lilies of the field are "glorious" and beautiful, though they wither in the heat
 - 1. Will you trust God to make you glorious, or will you trust in your workout, your clothes, your makeup, your hairstyle?
 - ii. Only God makes you glorious and beautiful
 - 1. Many people look to money to make themselves feel attractive, important, significant, beautiful
 - 2. People spend a lot on themselves in order to *feel* acceptable and desirable to others
 - a. Certain clothes, certain cars, entertaining parties, etc.
 - b. The irony is that you never know if people are around you because they love you or are attracted to you or if they like what you can provide for them
 - c. The tragedy of this mindset is that most people who are captivated by beauty and money in this way are highly unlikable and thus they spiral to destruction.
 - i. These people look at the "security" minded people as greedy – misers, robber barons, corporate hoarders
 - ii. The "security" minded people look down on the "beauty" people as self-indulgent, ostentatious, etc.
 - iii. Both groups are self-destructive and blind to their own greed
 - 3. Beauty is being valued by those in whom you delight, and God delights in you!
 - a. You don't throw a party for Him...He dances over you! (Zeph 3;17)
 - b. He "delights" to give you His kingdom and values you more than the lilies!
- e. What are you "pursuing?"
 - i. What does Jesus mean when he says "the nations of the world *pursue*" and uses phrases like "Seek first the kingdom?"
 - ii. To "pursue" something is to pursue it at full speed, full expenditure of energy, to bear down with all your might to catch it, to seize it
 - 1. It's a compound word: "over + seek" (epi + zeteo)
 - 2. This leads us to overwork, to undersleep, to ignore or under-prioritize kingdom purposes in order to gain wealth *for our security or beauty*.
 - iii. Exhaustion in a pursuit of wealth is a sure sign of greed's pull on our heart.
- f. How are you "storing up"?
 - i. Greed reveals itself as a love for and trust in wealth when we start to stockpile for the future, as if Jesus' kingdom is uncertain and His return far-off.
 - ii. Jesus calls us to be willing to dip into savings, investments, possessions and to lower your net worth in order to give to the kingdom of God, to help those without such net worth
 - 1. Jesus is not calling you to give all your savings away (people didn't have or use banks or investment firms then)
 - 2. To sell one's possessions was to lower your net worth, to sacrifice future wealth for present needs around you

3. Jesus calls us to give away to friends, give away to ministry, give away to strangers, give away for the sake of others
 - a. If you cannot, you've got a greed problem. Money is too important to you.
 - g. If you are resting in your comfort, or you are worried about getting comfort, if you look down on those who have little or look up to those who have much, if you are running after future security and spending a lot on yourself to beautify and impress others, if you are exhausted and overworked running after money, and if you cannot lower your net worth for others, building bigger storehouses rather than with radical generosity sharing your abundance – then you have a greed problem.
 - i. You're trusting money to give you what only God can give you.
 - ii. A lot of us have this problem – and we don't see it – and even if we do see it now, we probably are underestimating its severity in our hearts
3. What Shall We Do When We Find It?
- a. See the grace of God
 - i. "O little flock, you have been given the kingdom" – God has graciously given the kingdom by His grace – see His compassion in these words!
 1. God's kingdom cannot be purchased by any amount of success, or good works, or generosity on your part
 2. We come to a King who purchased our citizenship with His own blood, regardless of your perfection or your obedience, and DELIGHTS TO GIVE IT TO YOU!!
 3. Trusting in this grace, this richness of the King, is what it means to "be rich towards God"
 - a. Inner wealth, inner rest, inner comfort, inner joy, inner life that is lived in the recognition of the Wealthiest King who became poor for you
 - ii. Behold His Faithfulness to love you
 1. "I will never leave you or forsake you" – He will keep His promise
 2. Even though we have failed to honor Him as we promised, He does not cancel the covenant, but continues to keep His promise...all the way to the Cross
 3. See the Cross of Christ and behold the faithful love of God for you: He *treasures* you!
 - a. 1 Peter 2:9 – "people for possession"
 - b. You are God's treasure, His glorious possession, and this grace is overwhelmingly glorious and TRUE!
 - i. What need have we of wealth tomorrow when we are God-possessed?
 - ii. What need have I of beauty when God treasures us to the extent that He sent His only Son (Rom 8:32)
 - iii. Savor His Beauty
 1. "Your Father delights to give you His kingdom"
 - a. Behold His kindness and compassion, His holiness and His grace
 2. When we see how much the Sovereign LORD treasures us, His chosen people, than we treasure Him
 - a. 2 Cor 8:9 – For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.
 - iv. This kindness of God is what leads us to repentance, to living a life of radical generosity, free from over-comfort and anxiety
 1. Every one of us has something that treasure above everything else, a center of our soul, "my precious", which rules us
 - a. Every other treasure will demand that you die to purchase it!
 - b. Jesus Christ is the only treasure that died to purchase you!
 2. Only by recognizing His grace and entrusting our very selves to Him will we find that He is superabundant for all our needs

- a. He is our security, eternally; He is our beauty, gloriously; He is our comfort, exhaustively; He is our victor, triumphantly; We are His treasure, incredibly!
- b. Know the Grace of God *Together* – you are a “flock” in a “kingdom”
 - i. We learn and do this together, in a community of needs and provision by the Spirit of God for each and for all
 - 1. One of the reasons that we don’t give radically is because we are afraid that we will not have what we need
 - 2. We don’t realize that *His Kingdom* will meet these needs
 - ii. We are the kingdom of God on this earth, O Beloved treasure of Christ, and when we rest in Christ Jesus, money is just money, not our security or beauty or delight
 - 1. Rather, our money becomes the expression of our delight in Christ and His people as we give it away for His glory and one another’s good – and this is real and substantial investing.
 - 2. This “kingdom” is not some “check-in-the-mail”, but rather the “little flock” caring for one another by meeting needs (2 Cor 8)
 - 3. Luke 18:28-30 - We are included in a community that, if we have given our homes and families for the sake of the gospel, “we receive many times as much in this age and in the age to come.”
 - iii. We need to create a community like unto Christ Himself, who though he was rich shared all that he had with His beloved -

Conclusion: The rich man, blessed by God with abundance, died among his storehouses devoid of any abundance toward God. We will too, if we only hear Jesus “tut-tutting” us about money. But 2 Corinthians 8:9 reminds us of something critical. Jesus says to us, as it were, “I was a rich man too, but I had a wealth, comfort, and status infinitely beyond what you had. And I lost infinitely more than you did — all to honor my Father and to gain you! To have you! To get you I had to leave my cosmic wealth and go to the depths of infinite misery and poverty so that I could save you. If I could leave all that for you, why can’t you be willing to set aside your money for me?”

When we see Jesus as the *true* “man of abundance,” we will be able to put all we have in his hands. We will see that his righteousness is our *real* spiritual wealth, and we won’t look to earthly riches to define us. Then, and only then, our money will become just money. It will stop being our security and significance.

Jesus’ first question in the gospel of John was “What do you want?” That’s a powerful question! It’s answer explains exactly why we live the way that we live and do the things that we do. When we treasure God for God, our wealth loses its power over us. Its promises are empty and powerless over us b/c we don’t want what it promises nearly as much as we want the truly treasurable, the LORD. The problem of greed is not in the wealth, but in our *affections* and in our *faith*. So, learn to ask the question of worship, every morning with the proper severity and propriety: “What is my gracious King worth? What is my beloved brother and sister worth?”

It is still a very pertinent question for my heart today, at every moment. Let us see and savor God as we meditate upon His great love for us at the cross. You are so treasured by God that He sent His only Son to die your death and be raised for your life. You are precious to the LORD. Will you treasure Him today?