

The Treasure of Our Souls

Jonny Kiedrowski | Luke 12:15-34

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So my kids are at this weird age where they don't really listen to music that much,
They're like just starting to become music aware
and so if they do listen to it it's usually something strange that's somewhere between Korean Pop,
Disney songs and nursery rhymes.
but they like the songs from a recent musical and so we'll listen to that a lot,
like in the car and stuff
It's the Greatest Showman movie soundtrack
You all know that one right?

The greatest showman is this movie where we get to hear Wolverine sing
while he pretends to be a fictional version of PT Barnum that is so unlike the real man,
you might not entirely despise him

But anyway, the movie follows Barnum on his rags to riches journey as he takes control of his destiny
and relentlessly pursues self-gratification and self-exaltation at the cost of the well being of everyone
around him.

And fittingly, Barnum finds his muse in a beautiful singer whose song shouts from the rooftops "Never
enough" (never, never)

His every effort was celebrated, every investment returned an increase, and every personal goal was
achieved

And as Barnum comforted himself with extravagance, and fame, and status ,and wealth, he discovered
how meaningless it all was.
Because it was never enough.
Never. Never.

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Have you ever gotten exactly what you thought you wanted only to find that it wasn't enough to satisfy
the longing desires of your heart?

This morning we're going to look at what Jesus says about our stuff and our souls.
Our anxiety about security, and God's provision for our eternity.
We're going to talk about comfort. We're going to talk about the treasure of our souls.

Through this teaching of Jesus we're going to see how our God-given longing for rest and comfort can
bend the shape our lives.
Bend it towards greed or gratefulness.
Towards fear or peace.

And my hope for today is to just help you hear the words of our Savior
to find out where you are in this
To find out if you're running or resting

And so to help us engage our minds as we look at this passage today I want us to consider three
questions as we spend this time together.
Take a second and write this down.

1. Are you running toward comforts?
2. Are you running away from discomforts?
3. Are you finding rest in a dependence on God that's rooted in the Gospel.

Before we get into the parable, I want us to start at verse 15 and look at the warning that Jesus shares.

And if you like to take notes you can write this heading down
Jesus Warns Us

vs 15

And he (Jesus) said to them, "Take care and be on guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

As I sat with the text this past week. I was stuck by how clear this warning is.
Jesus tells us what to watch out for (covetousness), what we must do (take care, be on guard),
And he tells us what's going on in our hearts that makes this important.
(That we can be prone to think that our life does consist in the kind of things and in the amount of things we have.)

And so that's his warning.

If you've read the gospels, you're probably familiar with the fact that Jesus often taught through parables. Stories. What he didn't do oftentimes was explicitly explain them.
Many people in Jesus' day thought that the way that he taught was confusing.
Including those closest to him, his disciples. Like they'd say "what did that mean?" and Jesus would almost seem frustrated and say something Like "really, you still don't understand?"

So to see Jesus preface a parable with an explanation is worth noting.
It's unique .
It's not his usual.

It's like he's already given us the lens that we need to rightly see the point of the parable that's coming up. We don't need to wrestle with our own interpretations. We can take Jesus at his word.

and his word of warning is against something in particular: Covetousness

I don't know about you, but I don't hear this word often. Covet. Covetousness.
In fact, I was talking about this with someone on our staff this week and between the two of us, we pronounced the word differently. He said covet-chis-ness, I say covetousness.

And to be clear the recorded voice that will read the scriptures to you in the Bible app on my phone agrees with me.

I don't hear it often, but I have heard it before.
So had the audience that Jesus was speaking to.

Because If we turn all the way back to the second book of the Bible, Exodus ,in Chapter 20, Verse 17 we read this

"You shall not covet your neighbors house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Have you ever noticed that when it comes to the ten commandments, most of them are concerned with prohibitions of certain outward actions, things like: Don't kill people, and Don't steal. Don't commit adultery. Don't do this thing out there.

But there is something different about the tenth commandment. Do not Covet.

This is one of the commandments that addresses the inner person, the heart and the mind.

In prohibiting coveting, calling it sin, God is showing us that sin is so pervasive that it includes not just what we do, but what we think.

I had you consider some questions a minute ago
and one of them asked if you're finding rest in a growing faith and dependence in God
The covetous heart cannot rest because It is never satisfied with what it has.

It is restless.

The theologian Augustine speaks to this when he says that,
"our hearts are restless until they rest in God"

And so whether we're comforting ourselves with our possessions
or our morality or anything but Christ, our restless hearts will not be satisfied
leading us to fear, anxiety and hopelessness.

"our hearts are restless until they rest in God"

And so as Jesus warns us, he's warning us about our thinking, he's warning us about of our hearts and what our hearts desire how that desire is misplaced and while he's warning us about covetousness, this consuming desire in the heart for what you don't have, he's also warning us about what covetousness does.

As we move on in our text we come to the parable of the rich fool.

So Jesus has warned us, and now
Jesus Shows Us

In this story, he shows us how his warning works out in the life of a rich man.
A man who was running toward comforts and away from discomfort.

So in Luke 12 starting at verse 16

16 And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' 18 And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.

"20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

When I first read this passage my thought was:
Well that escalated quickly.

It seemed like one minute there's this guy that doesn't have enough space to hold his crops and the next minute God calls him a fool and lets him know that he's about to die.

And what I realized is that what makes this story difficult for us is how culturally and practically reasonable the motivations of the rich land owner sound. This kind of sounds like some people's idea of the American dream.

Work hard, play your cards right, retire early and live off the interest.
On first blush, The punishment doesn't seem to fit the crime.

Isn't he being a good steward of what he's been given?
He needs to put those crops somewhere.

Shouldn't we save for a rainy day?

These questions miss the point though. In the command to not covet and from numerous other passages in scripture we understand that God doesn't just look at our outward actions, he looks at the heart and how the heart informs our actions.

Here's a few other verses that show us this
Jeremiah 17:10

"I the Lord search the heart
and test the mind,
to give every man according to his ways,
according to the fruit of his deeds."

1 Chronicles 28:9b

for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.

And Probably the best known of the bunch

1 Samuel 16:7

7But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

And so in our parable, It goes by quick, but let’s look back and look into the heart of this rich man.

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Because one of the the things Jesus shows us in this passage is this:

1. A prideful heart

Let’s look again at the language the rich man uses to describe his situation.

V17

What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ 18And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.

Did you hear it?

Did you hear the pattern in this man’s thinking?

Did you hear what was missing?

He says

- i. I will do this
- ii. I will tear down
- iii. i will build larger
- iv. I will store
- v. my grain
- vi. my goods
- vii. my soul
- viii. my plans
- ix. for my many years

And I can rest in what i have provided for myself, and my soul will rejoice in what I’ve done.

Where is the gratefulness to God for all he that has?

Where is the reflecting of the image of God in his life of showing generosity to others in the way that God has been generous with him?

This man was already rich before his giant harvest came around.

A land owner.

With so much stuff that he needs a bigger place to put his stuff.

It’s like hoarders: rich land owner edition

He already has a perfectly good barn.

One that has been adequate to not only hold his crops in this past but It was large enough to make him a wealthy man up until this point.

But he will tear down that barn and he will build a bigger one.
Because his hope for the future is based on a barn.
For this rich man, a bigger barn is a bigger hope.

He was trusting in things to provide what only God can.

And so I ask, Where are you trusting in things to provide what only God can?

I think Jesus has our hearts pegged in this passage.

We can work hard to spend hard.
To show off. To signal our success to the world with clothing, or technology, or.... barns like we see in the parable. You can be sure this guy was like
Hey Shadrach,
See my new barn.
Pretty big, right?
All the latest features.

Sometimes we can work hard to save hard.
We save up just see the bank account grow.... or the barn get bigger. But even this can bring a false security. A false hope. A prideful self-reliance and a harmful false-identity.
It denies our dependence on God and keeps our eyes on a temporal, fleeting salvation that we made ourselves instead of the eternal, costly salvation that Jesus purchased for us with his sacrifice at the cross.

The barn, and what it represented to this man in a life of comfort was this rich man's treasure.
It represented who he was: A man who provided salvation for himself.

And so Jesus reveals the prideful heart and the person that depends on themselves for their hope and their future instead of finding their future in a life that glorifies and honors God.

It's easy to see it now. This man is a master of his own destiny?
A self-made man like PT Barnum.
Enough is not enough, but more will always be enough.
Right?

Did you notice that really odd thing that the man did in Verse 19?
He talks to himself. In a weird way.

The part that says
And I will say to my soul,
"Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

Who talks to their soul like that?

Who goes to Big Dipper and says to themselves

"Soul tonight you will consume the starship brownie sundae, and then you'll be relaxed and be glad and be merry."

In reality we pursue everything we consume or experience this way.

and perceive our desires to be soul needs

My soul will be happy, if I have this

The truth is we speak to our souls all the time

Soul If you get an A you'll make it in life

Soul, If you get this job you'll feel secure

Soul, If these people notice you, you'll be in

Soul, being comfortable is worth whatever it costs

We talk to our souls all the time and don't even know it

In fact no one talks to your soul more than you.

And that's what's up for grabs. Our very souls. Our lives.

As Jesus says in verse 15, "one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions".

Possessions are not life-giving. Possessions don't provide meaning or purpose.

Our stuff can't save us. And worse, many times our preoccupation with worldly comfort distracts us and disconnects us from the reality of the greatest needs of our soul.

Now while this parable is looking most directly at material possessions, and taking a look at our problem of comforting ourselves with our stuff, a sinful pursuit of prideful, self-exalting comfort can find its way into our lives through many different avenues. When our lives center around preventing any measure of suffering, or humiliation, awkwardness or unease, weird things happen that disconnect us from people, from God, and even from reality.

Being a child of the 90's, Television commercials and NYC public school guidance counselors made something very clear to me: Drugs are bad. Don't do drugs. Just say no.

But besides them being illegal or how they affect your health and your relationships,
and maybe your teeth

Drugs are bad because we use them to escape reality.

Comfort can do the same thing.

Whether it's escaping a painful situation, or just escaping boredom

The world around us says that there is a cure for what ails us.

Pleasures, experiences, goods and services.

It's easy to fill our lives with distractions.

Some distractions are more destructive than others,

but all can become destructively, self-centeringly addictive

And so whether it's Video Games, Pornography, Instagram, facebook, pinterest, or anything else

I'm sure that you've felt it. the pull.

We can prefer make-believe to reality.

Because the reality is that things are messed up.
People around us are messed up.
We're messed up.

We escape reality and think to ourselves that our lives would be better if only I had what they had...
I'd be complete if she would just...
If I only had one more of these I would be...
Happy

We look at social media and compare our behind-the-scenes to someone else's highlight reel.

And unknowingly, we're staring off into the distance creating an imaginary world that will never satisfy
Like Barnum, It's never enough, right?

And we do this because we don't realize who we are and we forget who we belong to and to what we
have been called.

So now we're at the point in the passage where things escalated quickly remember?

And this is my second point in this section:
2. Our Souls Belong to God

picking up again in VS 19

19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.

"20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

The things that this rich man had, all belonged to God
and his soul is God's as well

This is true because God is our creator.
It's made even more true for those who trust in Christ for their salvation

God has a claim on our lives. As our creator. As our savior.
Our lives are meant to proclaim the glory of God because we are his. Made in his image.

In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter says to those who trust Christ,
"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may
proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

What does our stuff tell the world about what we think of God?

How can our things testify to excellency of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light?

How does what we think about God change how we see his blessings, and these resources he's given us?

You know, The most important thoughts that we have are the thoughts we have about God.

When you think about Jesus, and what he's done for you, have you ever thought about it in terms of generosity? The laying down of his earned and inherent resources so that your greatest need could be met?

I mean, when we know this about our God, why are we so prone to not be generous?
I don't believe it's a sign of stinginess, it's a sign of cowardice.
We're afraid.

Generosity is less about money and more about the posture of our hearts before God
It's unbelief in the fact that God himself will be our satisfaction.

We talked about speaking to our souls
We speak to our souls and wonder if God will fail us?
Our restless hearts, they want more proof.

But how does God prove himself?
When the writer of Hebrews says in verse 13:5 that God will never leave us or forsake us how can we be sure?

We Look to the Gospel
God can say he will never leave or forsake us because as Jesus died taking the sins of world
Jesus was forsaken instead of us
When we were rebellious, Christ was obedient unto death
When we loved ourselves and hated God,
Christ loved us and God poured out his wrath on him

We escape reality when we aren't careful to thoughtfully live with the Gospel, remembering it day by day and moment by moment.

Brothers and sisters, If you are looking for a resolution for this year I would encourage you to fight sin and find joy by putting off thoughtlessness and putting on thoughtful, daily reflection on the Gospel of Jesus.

Jesus gave up his comfort so that we could remain in God's perfect comfort forever.

At the end of the parable Jesus says:
So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

What does that mean? We get an idea in Matthew 6:19-21

19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What brings you the most comfort is what you treasure most.

If your treasure is in heaven it's imperishable.

If your treasure is Christ, Your desire to be satisfied will be satisfied forever

So what are the things you treasure most?

A healthy bank account?

The right kind of car?

The right kind of equipment for your hobby?

Maybe your treasures are more internal

Your job?

Your health?

Your talents?

Your mobility?

A clear mind?

On a long enough time scale, all of these are temporary.

And when they fail, if this is what you delight in, the hope of your heart will be crushed.

Is Christ your treasure? Is heaven your hope? Is the foundation of your faith so sure that like Paul in Philippians 3 you could say that

whatever gain I had I count as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I might gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith — that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his suffering, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

This what we rest in. This is where rest is. This is our faith.

Heaven is our Hope.

An eternity of worshipping God in his presence is our goal.

Jesus is our treasure and our faith in him

and in the reality of eternal life grows exponentially

as we turn from self-sufficiently comforting ourselves in worldliness

and find contentment no matter what our circumstances,

seeing even our weaknesses as opportunities for the power of the gospel

to be made manifest in our lives.

There's an old hymn that says:

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace"

The lies that we tell our soul, when we talk to ourselves about what we need
Vanish as the light of the gospel shines on them

Jesus knows what we need.

And when we speak to our souls, denying the reality of his rule over our lives
while we construct a kingdom of comfort

He speaks to our souls with a better word that looks forward to our eternal restoration to God and his Kingdom

Let's look at the rest of our passage as we move into our final section:

Jesus Comforts Us

Luke 12 starting at Verse 22

22 And he said to his disciples,

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat,
nor about your body, what you will put on.

23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.

24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn,
and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!

25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?

27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you,
even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

29 And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried.

30 For all the nations of the world seek after these things,
and your Father knows that you need them.

31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy.

Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old,
with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail,
where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

I love the clarity of Jesus here.

You see, We inaccurately see the needs of our own souls and meet them imperfectly.
Even sinfully.

Jesus correctly sees the needs of our souls, and he meets them perfectly.

We struggle with fear and anxieties about our health, and our future,
about our appearance, about our value and worth.

And to Jesus' followers here, there's nothing but compassion, hope, and comfort.

We seek out comfort without finding it when we see our lives as a greater treasure than Jesus.
But we find our comfort, when Jesus is all we need.

Like it says in Luke 17:33

Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it.

Jesus points to creation

To the birds, and to the flowers

He shows us how he plans and provides for our days and our eternity in his Kingdom.

God in his plan causes the flowers to flourish and be clothed in beauty.

And he does this for us, he cares for us more
and clothes us in righteousness forever.

Following Christ, allows us to be comfortable in the uncomfortable.
To be content no matter what.

And this is a good thing.

For the last 3 weeks Tyler has been walking us through the new birth and new life that comes with
trusting in Christ for our salvation. And just Last week we talked about the changes that God works out
in our sanctification.

But sanctification means being uncomfortable

It requires living out someone else will, instead of our own

We resist sin and confess sin

Serve others in ways that are costly to us

I mean, if our goal is to walk through life as comfortable as possible then nothing will threaten us more
than sanctification.

But if we see what Jesus has done and believe it, then our greatest comfort will be in trusting him, even when things seem uncomfortable.

Because we can't store up enough to save our soul
Things have value, but they're not valuable enough
to relieve our anxieties, to bring us peace, we need Jesus

Things
Experiences
Wealth
Safety
Comfort
Happiness
don't provide salvation; Jesus does.

We can't do things by the world's standards and expect to find our peace in Jesus.

Are you running toward comforts that will never satisfy?

Are you running away from the discomforts that come with following Christ?

- Following Christ and moving towards his kingdom will look different than following the world and building a worldly kingdom.
 - We can't do things by the world's standards and expect to find our peace in Jesus.
- or Are you finding rest in a growing faith and dependence that's rooted in the Gospel.

The greatest vulnerability you've ever experienced was separation from God.

But Christ became vulnerable for your sake.

He became distasteful to his Father so that you might be accepted and approved and receive all of the benefit he earned.

Jesus protects us from our ultimate fear and anxiety Because through faith in him we can stand before God our judge in confidence

And that means we can be courageously awkward and uncomfortable and stand before others, sharing our faith with them because we know that they won't be our judge.

We can make choices that honor God where we work, and live differently with our actions, and with our speech.

In small and large ways, we can deny ourselves, become less concerned with building our temporary kingdoms, and be a part of building God's eternal kingdom.

We can be uncomfortable in this world for Christ.

When our hearts long to see storehouses of security, wealth and reputation we should turn our eyes upon Jesus and see that our abundance is God himself not the gifts that God gives us.

And when we do that trusting in Christ will make us more comfortable in this world because it means that nothing in it has to save us