

Message Summary

Two weeks ago, Pastor Deric began leading us through Christ's important teaching on money. The Parable of the Rich Fool (12:13-21) reminds us that no matter how much stuff we accumulate in this world, materialism will never bring us lasting joy and purpose in this life, and profits nothing for the next life. Last week, we saw Christ's warnings against money's false promise of security, and the inevitable but needless anxiety it brings.

This week, Jesus continues to warn against loving worldly things by promising our greatest pleasure, joy, and delight in God Himself. Full obedience and discipleship to God – which Jesus describes as being “*rich toward God*” (v. 21) – brings pleasure to our heavenly Father. What's more, it also brings us our greatest pleasure! His phrase “*little flock*” (v. 32) is instructive; we are helpless, needy little lambs, not regal lions or strong bears. God wants us to find our pleasure in Him, because He knows that He is the only true and lasting source of it. Our heavenly Father delights in giving us good gifts to enjoy. Ironically, our day-to-day financial anxiety persists despite the fact that we are the wealthiest creatures to ever walk the planet. Living without fear in a world we cannot control starts with thinking of ourselves rightly: as little lambs in need of our Father's help, which he delights to give us. If we are only thinking of our earthly kingdom, we will never be satisfied and will always fear. But the kingdom of heaven, which cost us nothing and Christ everything, is the great treasure that our Father delights to give us.

Christ's practical message is simple: sell your possessions, avoid unnecessary excess, and develop an eternal perspective that prioritizes what is truly worth living for. What this requires is to become the kind of people who avoid trusting in ourselves and earthly goods and find our treasure in Christ, who bore our worldly anxieties and fears on the cross so that we could have the freedom to find our greatest pleasure in our Father, and in enjoying his good gifts rightly.

WHY IT MATTERS

Digging Deeper

As a family/small group, consider why money represents such a temptation toward love of earthly things.

Read together Deuteronomy 8:11-18. As the Israelites were entering the Promised Land, the Lord warns them that the settled lifestyle of the Promised Land (permanent houses, fields and crops, established borders and property) will present new temptations toward loving earthly goods. What are those temptations specifically? Does living an American lifestyle rather than, for example, a Somalian lifestyle, present even more of a temptation towards love of money? If so, how?

Who are some examples of Christ followers in the Bible from various financial statuses who trusted Christ rather than their money? (For starters, consider Mt. 26:6-13; Acts 16:14-15; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; 2 Cor. 8:1-5)

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don't have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family discussion.

1. In what areas are your family/small group loving material goods more than the Father who has provided them?

2. Do you regularly thank God for his abundant provision as the giver of all good gifts (Jm. 1:17)? Spend some time right now thanking him.
3. In what ways are you anxious or fearful regarding earthly matters? What does this show about your heart?
4. Is the term *"little flock"* (v. 32) offensive at first? Why does our pride resist being a helpless lamb? Why does this pride ultimately yield anxiety and fear?
5. Have you ever thought of God as a God of pleasure? Do you find delight and joy in God Himself? How can you cultivate this practice this week?
6. What excess worldly things can you get rid of this week, to lessen your ties to the world and free you for more kingdom focus?

Prayer

- Pray for Our Church:
 - Thank God for providing all good things for us to enjoy, and for caring so faithfully for us as our heavenly Father.
 - Pray for those in your life you know are in need of God's sustaining grace, especially those who may be going through financial hardship.
 - Pray that God would protect our church from the love of money, anxiety, and fear this week. Pray that we would find our greatest delight in God himself.
- Pray for Our Community:
 - Pray for our community to see the futility of financial "security." Pray that financial idols would be torn down to make way for worship to the Lord in Spirit and in truth.
 - Pray for generosity and concern for those who do have financial needs in our community – for their material needs but, more importantly, their delight in God himself as a good Father.
- Pray for Our World:
 - Pray for radical generosity from the Christ Fellowship faith family to support gospel work around the world. Pray that the Lord would raise up missionaries from our faith family who will be willing to leave behind the false pleasure of materialism and false security of money for the sake of the gospel among the nations.
 - Pray for Cohen and Amy Ezelle's new CFC class on missions to help advance these purposes.