



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDES



Luke 12:13-34 The Parable of the Rich Fool

Luke 12:20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you'

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

- **Acts 29 Event – Exploring the Angles of God’s Mission in the West w/ Tony Merida**
 - May 31 Friday 7pm
- **Tri Church Summit weekend – No services**
- **Members Meeting this Sunday**
- **By the Book Mini Course – An Introduction to the Bible and Its Big Story**
 - Monday Nights starting June 10 @ 7pm
 - Register on the website
 - \$10



REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion around the ideas in the sermon. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who missed the sermon on Sunday.
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?
- Why is this important and worth discussion?

THE BIG IDEA

Why live for something that is not going to last? Why spend your days accumulating what you cannot take beyond this life? Why would you structure your entire life around growing a portfolio that is unable to provide any actual security and is ultimately meaningless in eternity? These are the points Jesus is making in this passage, as he warns his followers of the perils and short-sighted stupidity of materialism and desire for financial “security”. The upside reality is, if you pursue security first, you will lose it. But if you seek first the kingdom, you will lay up treasures in heaven – true and lasting treasures. True security is eternal and comes from the Father alone. He is eternal and all powerful and his attention extends to even the birds and the lilies. How much more does his care extend to us as His “little flock”? Therefore He says to us today: “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (v15). Seek first the kingdom and your heavenly Father will provide all that you need – and you can rest assured that is better security than the very best Super plan.

EXPLORE

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

RELEVANT SCRIPTURES

Luke 12:13-34 ¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵ And he said to them, “**Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**” 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.”

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.

Philippians 3:7-9 ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything 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 may gain Christ

UNDERSTANDING

1. **Getting Started:** What's the difference between greed and desire for financial security? Do you think there is one? What motivations drive each?
2. Read Luke 12:13-21
 - a. What do you think about the rich man's reasoning? He basically said: "I have more things than I can deal with, so I'll build bigger barns to house all my things!" Do you resonate with this attitude? Is this really so bad? (**Leaders Note:** Although this is almost a universal attitude in modern Australia and entirely accepted as reasonable, Jesus still calls this person a fool!)
 - b. What mistaken attitude did the rich fool have concerning his riches?
 - c. The man in the parable was a rich fool, but there are also poor fools and middle class fools. What is it that Jesus is teaching makes a person a fool?
3. Read Luke 12:22-34
 - a. Why does Jesus teach us that we should not be anxious about financial security? What is your reaction to this command of Jesus not to worry?
 - b. What does it mean to seek first the kingdom?
 - c. What does worrying suggest our concept of God?

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. Is there any immediate personal response to the sermon necessary for you?



2. What might be signs in your life that material security is more important to you than trust in your Father in heaven?
3. Do you find yourself placing your hope in earthly treasure instead of God? How does this work itself out in your life?
4. Matt said that we live out of both our positive and negative motivations: things we want and things we don't want. What positive and negative motivations do you find yourself living from?
5. How does treasuring God change your attitude towards your possessions? Remember, Jesus teaches us that we can't serve both God and money. We will ultimately have to choose.
6. Is your life marked by financial generosity towards those in need? Jesus here is blatantly commanding us to make this a priority in our lives. What individual items would you find most difficult to part with for the kingdom?
7. Is God calling **you** to any practical application? What positive steps can you take? Is there any active repentance necessary?

PRAY

Close time in prayer, sitting at the feet of Jesus.

- Pray that God would reveal the idols of earthly treasures in our hearts and that we would be instead filled with love for Him
- Pray for the generous hearts that seek to honour God with our possessions and resources.
- Take time to pray for those in need in our church family, and in our wider community.

HELPFUL NOTES

ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTES

Luke 11:27–13:9 Various Warnings and Teachings. As they continue their journey toward Jerusalem Jesus gives his disciples additional instruction.

Luke 12:13–15 tell my brother to divide. Because of Jesus' teaching on covetousness, which immediately follows this request, this man is probably speaking from personal greed. **who made me a judge ...** ? Though Jesus was Lord of the entire universe, he was careful not to become involved in matters that did not directly pertain to his earthly work and ministry, and he expected people to work out such things on their own. **life does not consist in ... abundance.** Cf. 9:24–25; 12:22–34.

Luke 12:19–21 Fool! Ironically, the man who took such great care to prepare for his own (earthly) needs turns out to be a fool. Instead of fulfilling his moral responsibility to care for the needs of others, he is rebuked for laying **up treasure for himself** and for not being **rich toward God**. Though this verse does not prohibit wealth, Jesus clearly warns his hearers concerning the dangerous eternal implications of wealth, with its seductive tendency toward complacency, self-sufficiency, and covetousness. Though the rich fool anticipates years of ease—a time to **eat, drink, be merry**—instead



an eternal destiny apart from God awaits him. As Jesus' condemning words confirm, **"This night your soul is required of you."**

Luke 12:22–25 Therefore, i.e., because of the truths taught in vv. 13–21, **do not be anxious**. The first reason why believers should not be anxious is given in v. 23 (**for life is more than ...**); the second in v. 24 (**of how much more value are you**; cf. note on Matt. 6:26); and the third in Luke 12:25 (because no one has enough control over his own life even to **add a single hour to his span of life**). **Life** (or "soul"; Gk. *psychē*) and **body** refer to the whole person. (Regarding "add a single hour to his span of life," see esv footnote; "hour" is literally "cubit" [Gk. *pēchys*], and most commentators take it to be a metaphor for adding a standard unit of measure to the length of one's life.)

Matt. 6:26 Human beings are of **more value** than animals (cf. 10:31; 12:12) because only humans, out of all God's creatures, are created "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27), because God gave the human race dominion over all the earth and all its creatures (Gen. 1:28), and because God loved human beings so much "that he gave his only Son" to die for our sins (John 3:16).

Luke 12:25–27 Jesus employs two "lesser to greater" arguments (vv. 25–26 and v. 27) to affirm God's care for his children. **Solomon in all his glory**. Cf. 1 Kings 10:4–5; 2 Chron. 9:5.

Luke 12:28 the grass ... is thrown into the oven. Due to the scarcity of wood in ancient Palestine, dry grass was used as fuel. **O you of little faith** implies a deficiency rather than an absence of faith (cf. Matt. 6:30; 8:2b; 14:31; 16:8).

Luke 12:29 Do not seek does not mean that people should neglect to work and support themselves (cf. 1 Thess. 4:11–12), but is a warning against worrying and continually seeking after **what ... to eat** and **what ... to drink**. Cf. Luke 12:31 for what *should* be sought after.

Luke 12:33–34 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy is a strong emphasis in Luke. **Moneybags that do not grow old** is a metaphor for the place where one stores one's treasures. Because the believer's treasures are stored in heaven, the believer's "moneybag" (the heavenly storehouse of his treasure) will never wear out, will **not fail**, and is safe from being stolen by thieves and destroyed by moths (cf. Matt. 6:19–21). In contrast to the world's preoccupation with possessions, the disciples are to be characterized by exceedingly great generosity, especially in giving to those in need (lit., "to give alms"). This even has eternal implications—**for**, as Jesus solemnly warns, **where your treasure is** (whether on earth or in heaven,) **there will your heart be also**. This concluding proverb (Luke 12:34) emphasizes the importance of the disposition of one's heart, which throughout Scripture represents the centre of one's being and one's deepest desires, including one's reason, convictions, emotions, and will. The nature of one's heart is reflected in the things that one values most.



NEWSLETTER REFLECTION

"And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?"

- Luke 12:25-26

Jesus has a way of getting to the heart of the matter.

In the parable of the rich fool, he starkly highlights the ridiculousness of living for material gain. He tells the story of a man who faces an all too familiar dilemma in our day: *what do I do with all my stuff?* His answer is to expand his property to house it all. In our age of prosperity in relation to the sweep of history, this may hit a bit close to home. But the story gets worse - God confronts him in his selfishness! "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'" (Luke 12:20).

Jesus shows us the absurdity of living for comfort and riches, and yet, there is something altogether intoxicating about its pursuit. What is it? I think Pastor Matt hit the nail on the head on Sunday. Underneath the surface, something else is going on. What looks like pursuit of wealth is ultimately just the ultimate the pursuit of control and security. In our out-of-control world, we want to feel like we can insulate ourselves from the difficulties coming our way. It is for this reason that Jesus connects this parable to his teaching about anxiety and worry!

God, Jesus says, takes care of the birds and the grass. At the end of the day, they are just *birds* and *grass*! What about *you*! You are what Jesus calls part of his "little flock". And what's more, your Father delights to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32). In light of who your God is, there is little cause for alarm.

So do not be anxious. Trust Him. Stop building bigger barns, and place your faith in your Father who loves you.

- Pastor Mike

REFERENCE:

Developed with the help of the following:

- Tom Wright. For Everyone Bible Study Guides – Luke.
- Ada Lum. A LifeGuide Bible Study – Luke: New Hope, New Joy.
- ESV Study Bible, Crossway.